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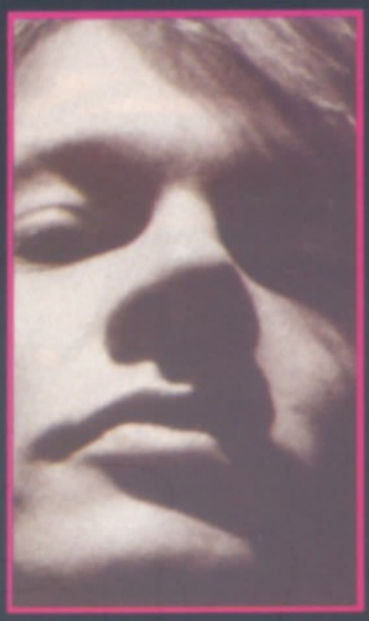

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STATIC

MUCHO METAL MAIL

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Maybe I'm both blind and stupid when I say that the USA's becoming a totalitarian state more and more. I mean, how can you call your country "the land of the free" with all this censorship stuff floating around? Okay, so I might just be this stupid Swedish girl, but as Sweden's very influenced by the USA, I don't want to end up having the same problems as you have. This Tipper Gore's gotta have a problem! Were her parents brother and sister, or what? I can't get how people put up with her. All this censorship stuff's nuts, and it scares the shit out of me every time I buy an album marked "Explicit Lyrics, Parental Advisory." You really go to extremes! Tipper Gore would die if she ever came to Sweden. We cuss, drink, smoke and get to see sexual intercourse on TV (that's mainly in Swedish TV plays, which suck anyway). Movies that are rated X in the USA are put on the air after 9:00 p.m., so small kids won't see them. Swedish pop music's main subject is making love, and we don't get "beeps" in the middle of the songs! Okay, we've got some fanatic religious groups that haul their asses to the concert halls whenever there's a metal band playing—they give us flyers that we use for bonfires—but there's no strong organization behind it. So if you really wanna live in a free country, come to Sweden. (No, this isn't a commercial; I just felt I had to write it down!)

—Hjartliga H.
Huddinge, Sweden

CARTOON CONTROVERSY

Dear Adrianne Stone: Thanks for reviewing Volume 12 of *Hard 'N' Heavy* [*Freeze Frame*, July '91]. Let's talk more about those cartoons that you hate, and that the hundreds of fans that write to us, without exception, *like*...a lot! Firstly, if you had watched the series from Volume 1, You would have been up to speed on the whole plot. Let me fill you in so far: We established the fact that "Steve," Mr. Hard 'N' Heavy, is a delinquent; we punished him for his crimes and sent him to jail; we established that he was abused physically and verbally as a child; we illustrated that when society deals with this type of juvenile crime by sending kids to jail, the abuse and violence continue—which is as far as it goes through volumes 13 and 14. What you will find out in future volumes of *Hard 'N' Heavy* is that from this turmoil something positive, in terms of self-determination and overcoming the handicap of an unfortunate childhood, comes out of this tragedy.

We haven't invented these cartoon storylines. Read a newspaper, and we'll find out who lives in the '90s. I can't find anything except sex, violence, crimes committed by gangs, the police, bankers, government officials, and a little war, plus a touch of genocide thrown in for good measure.

That's the real '90s on *our* street!

Fortunately, the fans follow the series and know all this, which is why the fans also know about the best new bands before the press, the coolest records before the press, and have decided that *Hard 'N' Heavy* is the real deal. One more thing: Cartoons aren't real, Adrianne, they're fiction.

—John B. House
Producer/Director
Hard 'N' Heavy

GREAT GUNS

Hey, guys! You called your article on the new Guns N' Roses album "The *Illusion* of Greatness" [June '91]. C'mon! We all know that GN'R's greatness is *no* illusion—unless we've all been royally f?!ked over! Okay, it was a nifty attempt to put the title "Use Your Illusion" into your headline, like you music mags *love* to do. Anyway, it doesn't matter much, because the article was, well, greatness. I know me and probably 15 million other people are hungrily eating up every tidbit they can get on this incredible band these days! Shame on you for dangling this in front of us before the inevitable cover story! I guess we can forgive. Anyhow, keep up the great work! How do you spell quality? R-I-P!

—Michelle
Austin, Texas

BUMMED AT BOOBS

Too bad my first letter to your mag has to be a complaint. We just got the June 1991 issue, and both my husband and myself were shocked at the disgusting photograph of the Nelson twins and those girls with the huge, sagging breasts [*Potshots*]. That picture is very unattractive and sexist—to be blunt, it's f?!king gross! Hopefully this is the only time something like that will make it to your mag.

—B.T.
Vancouver, Washington

QUEENSRYCHE QUIPS

It seems you and your readers worship the "great almighty" Queensryche. I'd like to take a second of your time to set the record straight. At the moment there happen to be several progressive hard rock and metal bands (Rush, VoiVod, King's X and Dream Theatre) whose musical and lyrical complexities make Queensryche look like the Partridge Family. Even Queensryche's last album, *Operation: mindcrime* (hailed as "the concept album of the decade" by overambitious publicity people who used to work for Rush), was vastly overrated. Compared to Floyd's *The Wall*, and its insanity and alienation concept, and compared to Rush's *2112*, and its individual against the state concept, "Mindcrime," "Dr. X" and "Nikki" come off as a third-rate comic books. In case you're wondering, I am not some 45-year-old ex-hippie reliving past glories of the 1970s. I am 19 years old, and my favorite band is Slayer. However, I am

also a fan of bands that are innovative, original and risk-taking. Sorry to burst the bubble, guys, but Queensryche ain't one of 'em.

—Paul K.
Naples, Florida

As I anxiously wait for Queensryche, the greatest band in the world, to come to my town, I can't help but wonder who the genius was who put Suicidal Tendencies on the bill. I am torn between going to the show late enough to miss their set and going early enough to help boo them off the stage. Whoever set this show up obviously wasn't thinking about the fans, because there aren't many Queensryche fans that are also into Suicidal Tendencies. Suicidal Tendencies are a joke of a band that should still be playing the garages of America, not opening for the likes of Queensryche. —Nick P.
Bellmore, New York

MODERN MESSAGE

I have never in my life read such shallow, childish and pathetic comments as those expressed by Blackie Lawless in his thinly disguised attack on Lita Ford ("Blackie Lawless: Working Out the Bugs," May '91). His reference to Chris Holmes as a "Chinese houseboy," just because he washes dishes and wears aprons, is both sexist and demeaning. I guess he wouldn't call Lita a "Chinese housegirl" if she did housework, because chauvinists like him consider that woman's work. His small-minded statements are an insult to every modern, '90s man and woman who chooses to share a relationship based on equality and respect. Chris Holmes is obviously a secure man of the 21st century. Maybe one day you would like to join him there, Mr. Lawless. —Golnar M.
Placentia, California

MORE ON THE MEGA-MUTATION

This is to Dale H. ("Mega-Mutation," *Static*, June '91): Maybe Dave's just higher on the evolutionary ladder. What do men need nipples for anyway? —Sherry L.
Boca Raton, Florida

POISON PEN

In response to the letter written by "Looking for Fun," in the June '91 *Static* column, I want to bring something to your attention! For your information, asshole, Bret Michaels is a diabetic, and has been since two years of age. It's hard enough to play onstage as it is, and being a diabetic too! The reason C.C. and Rikki are playing those *long* and, as you called them, boring solos, is to allow Bret time to check his blood sugar level and inject insulin when necessary! We are all very lucky that modern medicine makes it possible for him to perform for us as lead singer for Poison! He can waste as much of my precious concert time as is necessary. I'd like him to be alive a long time, so that the band can continue to perform their kick-ass songs. Sounds to me like you're an ignorant, ungrateful S.O.B. Grow up.

—Knows Rock and Roll

GOD AND COUNTRY

It amazes me how numb people are to four-letter words and other obscenities. Musical artists are busy defending their First Amendment freedoms from censorship, even though some, like Sebastian Bach, "got into rock 'n' roll to get out of responsibility, not into it." I have been a musician since the '60s, and played drums with Rubicon, the late Rick Nelson, in other bands with Sammy Hagar and Jack Blades, and, recently, with the Darrell Mansfield Band. I've been through many experiences in search of "artistic" freedom, but one experience was life-changing and gave me real freedom. I also discovered a five-letter word that is censored more than any four-letter word. No, it's not Elvis, the king of rock. It's the "J" word, the King of Kings, Prince of Peace, Rock of Ages and Righteous Judge. And what would He say about profanity and obscenity? "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." I'm just trying to tell rockers and rappers to pull their pants back up and quit exposing themselves. It *is* possible to rock with your pants up! Finally, hell is not a four-letter word, it's a real place and there are no "brewskis" there!

—Greg E.
Medford, Oregon

Why fight censorship? Maybe we need it because of the assholes in this world. Nobody's ever died from censorship. I know you people will say I'm wrong, but I know I'm right. If any of you cared about this country and people besides yourselves, you would see there's more to fight for, like AIDS victims, drug addicts, the homeless, pollution—the list goes on and on. Fight censorship when there is no more pollution, no more drugs, no more people dying needlessly. The people who fight censorship are selfish assholes who don't realize there are, in fact, other people in this world. Nobody can deny you the right to freedom of speech, so why do you want to degrade women even more than you already are? If you really care about America, the greatest country in the world, please listen to what I am saying; and if you don't, you can kiss my white American Harley-Davidson ass. —Mindy

COMIC CORRECTION

I am writing to you about an article in RIP regarding Trixter ["Youth Gone Kooky," May '91]. It said that the band got its name from a Batman character. I've been seriously into comics for about 20 years, and there is no character in Batman by that name. However, there is a character named the Flash who had a foe with this name. Since some of us metalheads are also comic fans, I thought it would be nice to clear this up. Other than that, I think this magazine is awesome!

—Ed R.

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LARRY FLYNT
publisher
LONN M. FRIEND
executive editor
CRAIG JONES
art director
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M. PETER SOIKKELI
associate art director
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KRISTINA ESTLUND
editorial/promotions
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photo editor

SANDRA RIZZARDI, *copy editor*; CATRINA MASON, BETH MORALES, *editorial assistants*; JEFF MOSES, STEFFAN CHIRAZI, SHARI SLOANE, S.L. DUFF, MIKE GITTER, CHARRIE FOGLIO, ADRIANNE STONE, JUDY WIEDER, *contributing editors*

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PRODUCTION
DONNA HAHNER, *vice president, production*; GREGORY ROSATI, *production coordinator*; BRIAN McGINNIS, *production assistant*

ADVERTISING
MICHAEL W. MATHIESON, *advertising manager*, P.O. Box 445, Commack, NY 11725, (516) 493-0134; RANDY BROWN, *west coast sales manager* (213) 858-7155; MAGGIE CHUN, *advertising production director*; KAREN E. NICOLAS, *advertising production coordinator*; CHANTAL DINNAGE, *advertising coordinator*

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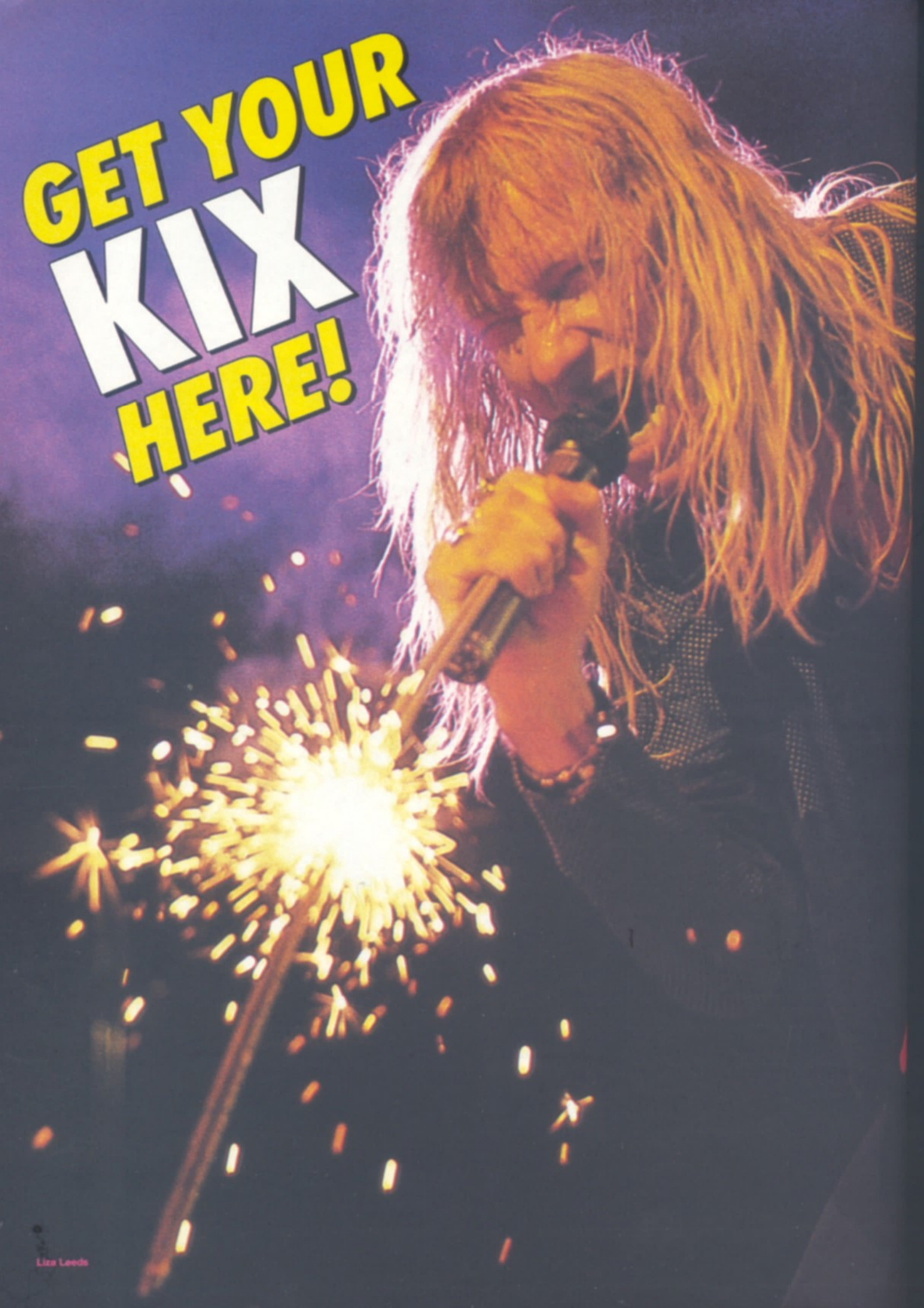
GET YOUR
KIX
HERE!
Liza Leeds

Mike Hashimoto/NGI

Certainly we've all heard of "overnight" success stories. Out of nowhere, one try, blam...stardom! Well, that's not Kix's story. Kix is more of an "over the decade" success story. It took them eleven years to have their first major hit, "Don't Close Your Eyes," an anti-suicide song with soul. They were signed by Atlantic Records back in 1981, when A&R representatives picked up on a Kix buzz storming the tri-state area—Maryland, Washington and Pennsylvania.

"We thought we had it made, a dream-come-true story," lead singer Steve Whiteman explains. "They stopped us in the middle of our set and said, 'How would you like to record for Atlantic Records?' Can you imagine? Little did we know it would take ten years of recording, rehearsing and nonstop touring to finally put us over."

"Putting over" took place in 1990, when "Don't Close Your Eyes" suddenly started to climb the charts.

"We kinda thought that would be a big record for us," Steve continues, matter of factly. "But it almost got overlooked, because it was the fourth single off our *Blow My Fuse* album. They told us that our album was dropping off the charts, and we should go home and begin making demos for a new album. We said, 'Hey, wait a minute. We've got this great song on the album.' It took a little coaxing, but everything worked out."

As a result of this near-miss miracle single, Kix today is very optimistic about the release of their new album, *Hot Wire*. Hanging around Sunset Sound Studios in Hollywood, where producer Tom Werman is putting the finishing touches on the record, Steve, guitarists Ronnie Younkins and Brian Forsyte, bassist Donnie Purnell and drummer Jimmy Chalfant know that with a little luck, thanks to a solid following and more good songs, this could be their big year.

"This is our fifth album," Steve says. "Each album gets a little bit better, because all the touring we do makes us grow as musicians. Donnie and Jimmy are great songwriters, and we've got the same writing team as last time. The rest of us don't mind not being writers on this album. For one thing, I suck! We definitely want to make the best album, so there's no controversy over whose music is picked. I honestly don't think there's too much difference between this album and the last one. We pretty much do high-energy rock 'n' roll from the first album to this one. I really don't think the Stones have changed all that much, or AC/DC. I really don't think our style has changed. The songs are just different."

"Our first single is called 'Girl Money'," Ronnie explains, picking up a bowl of fresh fruit and examining it. "You know, you can have gas money and food money, so why not 'girl money'? The title song, 'Hot Wire,' blazes from beginning to end, very high energy. There are lots of fast tunes on this record."

Since all the bandmembers hail from Maryland, one can't help but wonder how this atypical rock 'n' roll state came to shape the music of Kix.

"We had a lot of places to play, for one thing," Brian says. "When we started out, there were a lot of clubs that we hung out in. This band started out on $150, 12 years ago."

"We still have that $150," Ronnie kids.

"Yes, we made it back, that same $150. What a success story we are," Steve laughs. "We also did a lot of cover songs that people would come to hear us play. Then we'd throw in some originals in between. We were lucky to play cover material. I think you learn how to write when you're playing good material

By Judy Wieder

—songs by Aerosmith, the Rolling Stones or Zeppelin. Today, bands, especially bands in Los Angeles, don't even know how to play, and they're already writing their own stuff. I think playing other people's stuff made us better players and set high standards for us to meet when we're writing."

"We always had a great following too," Brian boasts—with good reason. "We never felt the need to move to New York or Los Angeles to make it, the way a lot of bands do. We just stayed in Maryland, and we're still there. There are other bands from there, Wrathchild and Child's Play. We were always growing too. Every now and then we'd capture a new state, like North Carolina or New York."

"We were kinda like big fish in a little pond," Steve admits. "But now the pond is getting bigger. It was regional, now we're going for national."

"International," Ronnie corrects, referring to the band's huge popularity in Japan and growing European audiences.

"Yeah, we're starting this tour out in Japan, then Canada, Europe and finally America," Steve says. "It's great to play Japan. If your ego needs building up, go to Japan. You feel like the Beatles. They are the biggest rock 'n' roll fans around. They're out there singing along with you, and they don't even know what they're singing about!"

After touring nonstop for over ten years, Kix is currently trying to recover from their first extended vacation. Well, not *exactly* a vacation—they *did* write and record an album.

"We've been off about a year," Steve calculates. "It's the first time since we've been a band that we could actually stop and sit back and make real demos in our studio. The only time we went out on the road the whole time was when we needed some money. We called it our 'whore tour,' because we did it for money. Actually, it was great to go out and bounce a lot of new material off a live audience. Everybody wanted to hear our old stuff, 'Don't Close Your Eyes' and 'Cold Blood,' so if you throw out a new tune and get any reaction at all, you're happy with it."

"The hardest thing of all for us," Brian confesses, "is adjusting to getting on and off the road. You come home, and you're wired."

"You're wired, and everybody else around you doesn't understand," Steve elaborates. "You're the only one who wants to get up and go all the time, because you've still got that road energy in you. It takes a while to adjust."

"And then when you do," Ronnie grins, "you have to get your motor running all over again. Once you stop, that's when you find it hard to keep going. Some bands have to take time off, or they'll burn out; but we've played so much in our career, it doesn't matter."

"Actually, there's something I hate worse than adjusting to a road rhythm," Brian confesses. "I hate puking."

"He does puke a lot," Steve says, straight-faced.

"Did you puke in Birmingham?" Ronnie asks.

"Oh, well, that wasn't from drinking," Brian insists. "I had food poisoning. I had to find a place to puke, because I was onstage. We have all these fans onstage that kinda cool everybody down, but we hide them so the audience doesn't see them. I got sick."

"During 'Close Your Eyes,' no less," Steve remembers, turning a bit pale.

"So I handed my guitar over and ran behind the amps, trying to find a clear spot," Brian continues. "There were all these cords and wires everywhere. It just came out in buckets, at least five gallons."

"Then it literally hit the fan!" Steve covers his face. "Donnie's fan, near his bass, really sent it flying."

"It was a small club, too, so the whole place stunk," Brian finishes. "But I felt better for about half a song!"

The story of how Kix got their name changes every time someone asks. Once they told me Kix meant "kicks," as in "they get their kicks from rock 'n' roll." Today, the same question gets an answer about cereal.

"You know that cereal Kix?" Brian says, seriously.

"No, no, it was Fruity Nuts," Steve pipes up, "but the record company wouldn't let us use that. Naw, actually, we were originally called the Shooze. We were actually the Shooze when we got signed to our record contract. But there was another band with that name, so we had to change ours. Donnie had played in a band called Kix, in Pittsburgh. He reminded us of that, and we decided it was perfect. So that's what happened.

"Now, how the band from Pittsburgh got the name Kix, ahhh, that's an interesting story...."

But not the slightest bit true or relevant. •

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Edited by Janiss Garza

JUNKYARD: ***Sixes, Sevens and Nines***
(Geffen) †††

Sweaty, blue-collar Texas rock 'n' roll. That has a nice ring to it—sorta like Dennis Hopper in *Blue Velvet*, screaming, "Pabst Blue Ribbon!" Junkyard, the band who wear the legend "Hollywood" on their backs and hold the grit of Austin in their hearts, are a sweating, grunting beer commercial just achin' to be.

Let's face it, producer Tom (Motley Crue/Poison) Werman stripped their eponymous '89 debut of the massive krud-boogie so integral to the Junkyard pummel. On disc they were a paler shade of Motley, as typical as any old thing signed in the Guns N' Roses ground swell. Live, it's another matter altogether: grunge-powered, three-chord, AC/DC, workingman's rock spitting Motorhead blood and bile; the American Rose Tattoo; beautiful losers too unhip for their own good. It's a shame Geffen's A&R folk never got the brass-knuckled point. Left to their own devices, Junkyard could have been the most important gutter denizens outta L.A. since Guns N'...you know who.

There's a record in this collection of ex-punks (let's not forget the Minor Threat, Big Boys, Dag Nasty and Decry connections) that's long been screaming to get out. *Sixes, Sevens and Nines* isn't quite it, but it's louder, bluesier and sharper than its predecessor. A step closer to the snarling, punkish energy their live affair stinks of, it's the midpoint to a real Junkyard identity.

Aided immeasurably by Ed (Soul Asylum/Living Colour) Stasium's knob-twiddling, cuts like "Misery Loves Company" or "Throw It All Away" truly stomp. There's an air of maturity and confidence that creeps into burly guitarist Chris Gates' collaboration with fellow Texan Steve Earle, "Slippin' Away," an honesty-drenched dirt ballad that the Poisons of the world wish they could still pen. Singer David Roach is allowed more room to snort and snarl, giving the material added bite. The album's closing number, "Lost in the City," is probably the most revealing thing Junkyard's ever written: an energetic reinterpretation of British ska-punkers the Ruts' "Staring at the Rude Boys."

There it is, Junkyard in a nutshell: Cowboy boots instead of Doc Martens, they're still working the same three chords they've been harping on for years.

Punk didn't die, man, it just moved to Hollywood. *—Mike Gitter*

Lethal!	†††††
Call the Paramedics	††††
Heart Flutters	†††
Mild Abrasion	††
No Damage	†

SKID ROW: ***Slave to the Grind***
(Atlantic) †††††

Talk about an exclusive! Snake walked into the RIP offices during deadline week, holding ten of the 13 songs that make up Skid Row's new album. They were literally hot off the mixing board, and we were the first outsiders to hear one of the most anticipated records of the year.

So what can you expect from the Skids this time out? A heavier, wilder approach. Tunes that demand to be cranked to the max. "Monkey Business" is loaded with fire and punch, "Slave to the Grind" is pure, unrelenting speed, and "Psycho Love" has a wicked groove. There's the jet-powered blues of "Livin' on a Chain Gang" and the chilling pound of "Creepshow." The Skids are sounding better than ever too—Sebastian Bach's vocals carry an inviting tone of menace, while Rachel Bolan and Rob Affuso furiously hold down that thumpin' bottom end. And, of course, Snake and Scotti Hill are the guitarists from hell—check out Scotti's snarling solo on "Riot Act."

We waited with bated breath for the last three songs. Snake insisted that they weren't ballads—he preferred to call them "gothic period pieces." When they finally came in, we weren't disappointed. "In a Darkened Room," "Wasted Time" and "Quicksand Jesus" are all destined to be hits—Bas really cuts loose on "Wasted Time."

Slave to the Grind is larger-than-life and even more impressive than the Skids' debut album. When you visit your local record store, however, check out the song titles. Ballsier outlets will have the version with "Get the F?!k Out," while stores that prefer to play it safe will stock one with "Beggar's Day" instead. Both songs were favorites around the RIP offices, and either version of *Slave* is highly recommended. In fact, we think you should scout around a little and get both versions. You'll be glad you did. *—Janiss Garza*

CONTRABAND: ***Contraband***
(Impact) ††

There are inherent problems with any band labeled a "supergroup." First, they usually resent the classification. Like Damn Yankees. Second, it usually indicates a bunch of has-

beens trying to rekindle separately dying careers. And sometimes it works. Like Damn Yankees.

But that's not the case with Contraband, the all-star lineup comprised of vocalist Richard Black (Shark Island), guitarists Michael Schenker and Tracii Guns, bassist Share Pedersen (Vixen) and drummer Bobby Blotzer (Ratt). Every member of Contraband is in a currently functioning group, albeit some to lesser extents than others.

Formed as "a mutual admiration society," the raison d'être of Contraband's "special event" release is an opportunity for the members to have fun and give rock 'n' roll a shot in the arm. And if it helps anyone's career along the way...well, after all, rock 'n' roll *is* a business.

Recording songs from outside writers, Contraband fare best on the three most obvious cover tunes. Following the Great White school of thought, Contraband released Mott The Hoople's classic "All the Way From Memphis" as their first single, and their rollicking, true-to-the-original rendering garnered considerable airplay. Other tunes with that same energetic, live vibe—"Good Rockin' Tonight" and Bowie's "Hang On to Yourself"—scorch, with Black's underrated voice shining.

The cool vocal approach on the funkier, positive-affirmation tune "Stand" sets the song apart from the rest of the album, which tends toward standard commercial hard-rock fodder, along the lines of a Y&T or Dokken. Simply put, the material is too cliched. "Loud Guitars, Fast Cars & Wild, Wild Livin' " and "Bad for Each Other" are hackneyed concepts—sure, wonderfully played, but we've heard it all before. And here it is again. Just when you thought it was safe to turn on the radio...it is—in fact, it's *too* safe.

—Katherine Turman

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MORGOTH: *Cursed*
(Century Media) †††

Life in a sub-genre's a bitch.

If they were any more rooted in the sticky-swamp-heat, odious-noise onslaught that's become Florida's state hymn, German death metallers Morgoth would be playing gigs at Disneyworld. They fixate on the same grinding rhythms, rattle-the-tomb vocals and disemboweling guitar moves that Tampa's Death pioneered into gore-metal nirvana years ago. Morgoth are derivative—no arguing that point—failing to elevate the lessons Chuck Schuldiner taught on Death's '88 ugly masterstroke *Leprosy* to the new gruesome aesthetic of an Obituary, a Paradise Lost. The problem is, do we really need more sons of Chuck running around?

Actually, though, Morgoth are quite good at what they do. They're as bludgeoning and brutal a sonic roller coaster as you could ever hope to get squashed under—nothing new, but properly pummeling. *Cursed* is a major step up from their previous, embarrassingly unoriginal *Resurrection Absurd/Eternal Fall* LP. They're still hesitant to step out of the genre's constraints, but more than make amends with sheer intensity—shades of early Sepultura, perhaps?

Musically, they're still at the hack 'n' slash

stage. On the far from subtle "Exit to Temptation" or "Unreal Imagination" they chuck about tempo changes like toddlers tossing building blocks. The formula is far from unique: sheets of morbid riffing topped with vocalist Marc Grewe's lysergic charisma; each song a klutzy symphony, shifting tempos and moods, yet always returning to a central theme; strangely classical, though Beethoven would probably have been aghast at musical works like this. Still, at their most hideously doomish, Morgoth truly fly. "Isolated" and "Darkness" churn with a litany of aural grotesqueries; a deliberate, brutal grind that drags like a dead man's feet.

Blast-beat to blast-beat to guttural hatecore utterance, Morgoth make a respectable entre into the deathcore ranks at last. Lack of originality doesn't stop 'em from being a dark treat in their own right. —*M.G.*

ATROCITY: *Hallucinations*
(RC) ††

Under the auspices of producer Scott Burns, noted for his past collaborations with several Floridian death-metal acts, West Germany's Atrocity embody a sound that bears some semblance to the style of either Morbid Angel or Obituary with lyrics. The cover of *Hallucinations* is a reproduction of one of noted Swiss painter H.R. Giger's many surreal works, some of which have graced sleeves from Celtic Frost and the Dead Kennedys.

Hallucinations is fairly deafening death metal in the musical sense, but instead of the usual cheeseball Satan and gore themes, Atrocity stick to an underlying conceptual theme

throughout the record. Basically, the script opens with an abusive, pedophile father violating his daughter in "Deep in Your Subconscious." The lyrics are the product of vocalist Alex Krull's sick imagination, and will inspire quite a few laughs if you are the desensitized type. Krull gives typical banal treatment to the ensuing songs, which follow the emotionally incapacitated girl from her initiation into drugs in "Fatal Step" to an eventual overdose.

The music, mostly written by guitarist Mathias Roderer, piles on slabs of slower-hooked leads that speed up in segments, although it's frequently the drummer who provides the initiative and impetus to the songs. While unrelenting in heaviness, the music is often weighed down by too much piecework within the tracks. The whirlwind of leads gets trapped in the song structures, but the title track and the climactic "Last Temptation" are examples of plodding riffs merged with other eerie effects to create fairly interesting songs. *Hallucinations* is prime for a debut album, hinting that Atrocity will attain greater cohesion in sound as they advance.

—*Vicky Willis*

SARAYA: *When the Blackbird Sings...*
(PolyGram) ††††

Sandi Saraya's 1989 self-titled debut could best be summed up as a misproportioned album of sugar and spice and everything nice —too much sugar, not enough spice; a white dove of a record, if you will. On her new album, *When the Blackbird Sings...*, Sandi displays a newly sprouted pair of *cojones* large enough to intimidate any of her male peers. One has to wonder, though, what brought

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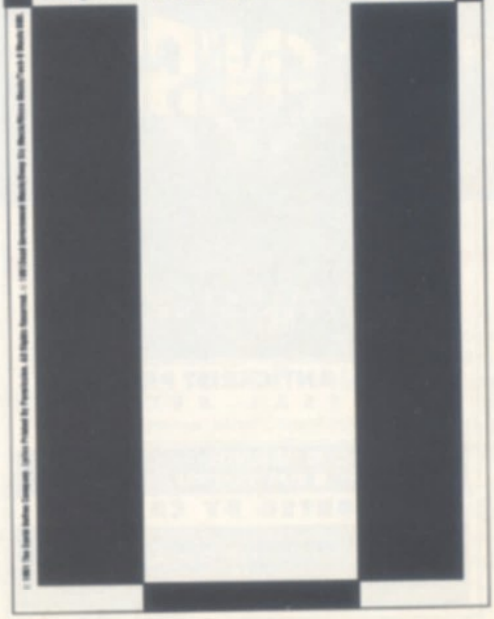

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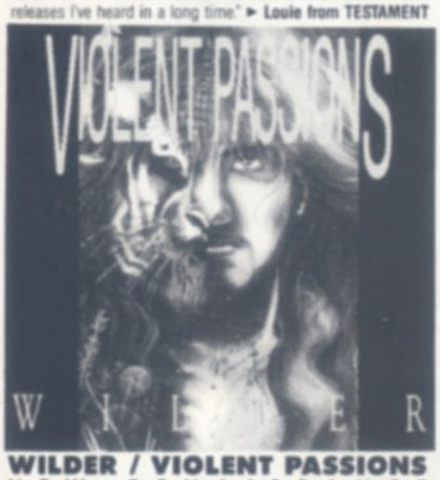

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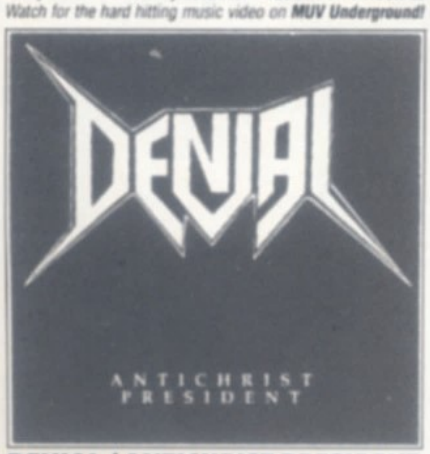

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about this newfound vocal ferociousness? Was it a lethal dose of testosterone, the ouster of Gregg Munier (whose lush and sappy keyboards oversweetened the first album), or the guiding hands of producer Peter Collins? Collins' (known for his work with Rush and worshiped for what he did with the last two Queensryche albums) presence is strongly felt on *Blackbird*. His layered, multi-textured nuances make this already great band sound like a wundercombo from Oz.

On *Blackbird* Sandi is rejoined by much underrated guitarist Tony Bruno and drummer Chuck Bonfante, who, in turn, are strengthened by the solid playing of newcomer (and ex-Yngwie) bassist Barry Dunaway (replacing the departed Gary Taylor). Dunaway humps Bonfante's kick drums like a dog in heat, while Bruno whips his axe like a lumberjack on acid throughout every cut on *Blackbird*. And as for the dynamic vocals of Sandi, she doesn't just sing here, she shines with heartfelt delivery; soaring intensely on the highs, sexy on the lows and wonderfully and surprisingly gritty in her mid-range. From the first notes of the lead-off track, "Queen of Sheba," the music on *Blackbird* jumps out at you with a jolt of electricity. This album is much more alive and energetic than its somewhat bland predecessor. Tracks guaranteed to stimulate your auditory senses include "Seducer," "When the Blackbird Sings...," "New World," "When You See Me Again..." and "Tear Down the Wall." It's nice to see that our "little white dove" has transformed into a marvelous blackbird. Sing to me, Sandi.

—Michael Moses

CYCLE SLUTS FROM HELL: *Cycle Sluts From Hell*
(Epic/Associated) ††

Wow, I'm conflicted on this one. Cycle Sluts From Hell are four women singers from New York's Lower East Side who dress in leather and have funny stage names like "Venus Penis Crusher" and do role-reversin' metal about bein' a tough chick and yankin' stupid guys around "By the Balls." That's cool with me. Every metal dude in the world probably deserves to be force-fed this album for a week, just to scour some of the accumulated male-supremacist attitude off our brains. But the Cycle Sluts' image is a little *too* cartoonish, like a bad compromise between (cheesmo) Rock Goddess and (gritty) L7, with a little GWAR thrown in for over-the-topness. When women playing hard rock do any kind of two-dimensional shtick, it helps maintain the old guy prejudice that females can't be taken seriously at high volume (making it tougher for the Dawn Crosbys and Sylvia Juncosas of this world). And that's ironic, considering Cycle Sluts From Hell have two reasonably serious songs, "Dark Ships" and "Soul Taker," which sound more mystical than the usual Girlschool-Motley-AC/DC shift 'n' shimmy the male-dominated backing band makes for the yuck songs. "I Wish You Were a Beer" is classic bad-attitude metal-punk, and the best (not to mention shortest) tune here, though it's not representative of the overall Sluts sound, the way "Badass Mama" or "Conqueress" are. *—Tom Nordlie*

D'PRIEST: *Playa Del Rock*
(Noise) †

Babe, this record's got it all. *Everything* you like is on this one: big, big sounding drums—you know, the kind where it seems like the guy's playing at the dark end of a cave; a singer who screams a lot and sounds as if he's wandering around in the same cave (sounds like he wrote the lyrics in that cave, too, and I think he forgot his flashlight); corny keyboard patches; Motley fuzz-guitar riffs; and immaculate Mormon Tabernacle backing yelps. What more do you want?

But that's not all. Check the cool photo of these guys. Is that real sweat or canned sweat? Cigs and Buds just so. Rockin'! The singer gets a point for his RIP T-shirt, which reads better than the lyric sheet.

If you really want a good read, glance at the thank-you list, which is longer than Interstate 5. Let's see, we got Sam Kinison, C.C. DeVille, an arsenal of journalists, lawyers, girlfriends, rockers of all stripes, Tina Turner, and Neostyle Fashion Eyewear—wouldn't want to leave them off. What do you suppose Tina did to earn her place on the list? Oh, the mind reels.

The band covers the Bay City Rollers' "Money Honey" and Nick Gilder's "Hot Child in the City," adding nothing to either but homogenized, sterile, '90s recording "quality." There are two power ballads in a row, "It's So Easy" followed by "Miss You." Christ, they can't even come up with their own titles. "Miss You" is over six minutes long, giving you, the power-ballad-loving listener, over eleven straight minutes of power ballads! And you thought you were gonna go somewhere today.

D'Priest is the last gasp of London, a ten-year-old L.A. club band that spawned Nikki Sixx, Blackie Lawless—even Izzy Stradlin supposedly stayed with them close to a week. When the last original member, Lizzy Grey, finally bailed, vocalist Nadir D'Priest named the remains after himself and somehow got a recording contract. I can't explain how these things happen, but I can advise anyone who still likes rock music to stay as far away from this as is physically possible. Having said that, I wouldn't be surprised to find my name on a future D'Priest thank-you list. Remember, the longer the list, the cooler the band. Isn't that the way it works?

—S.L. Duff

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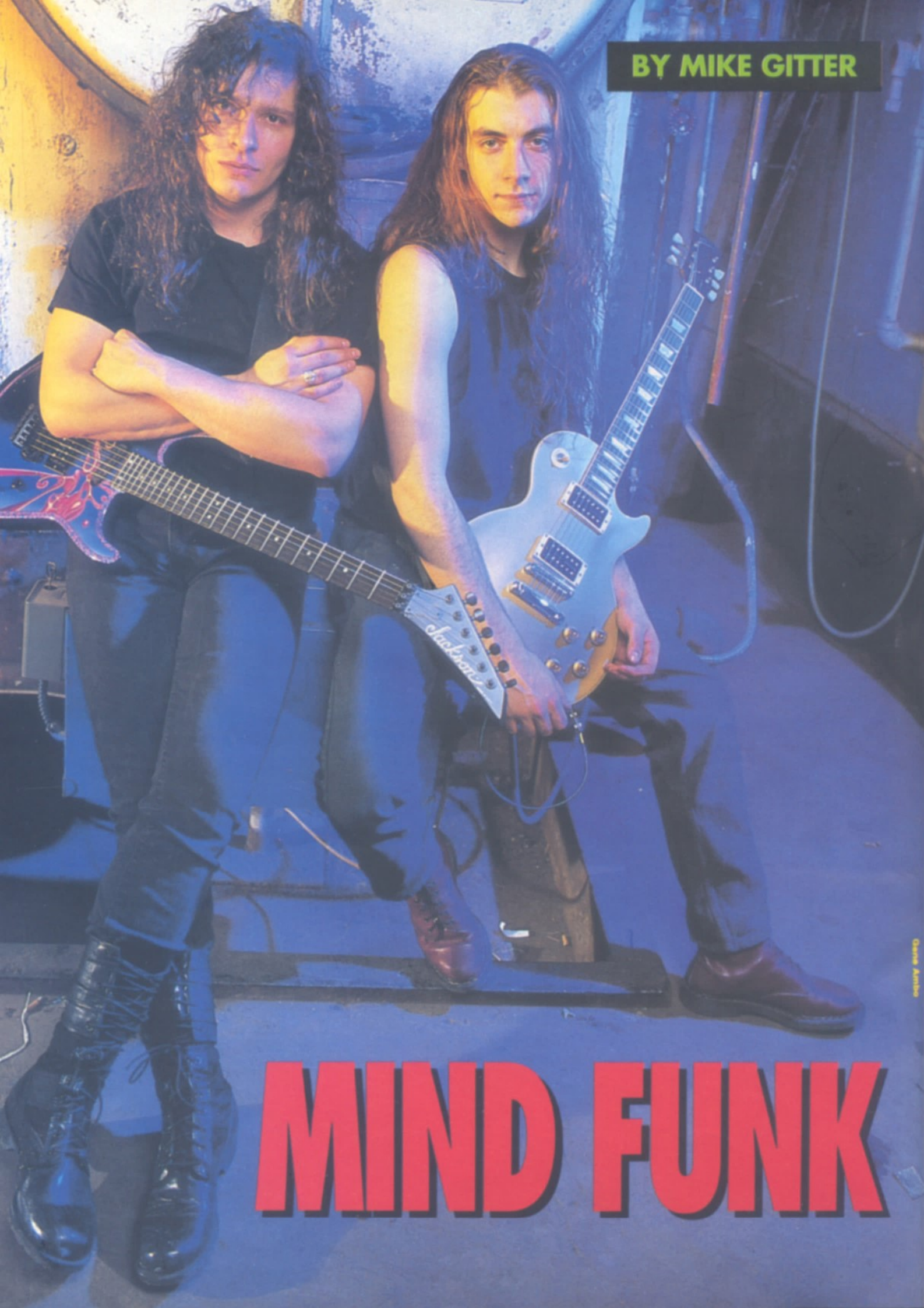
BY MIKE GITTER
MIND FUNK

GO FUNK YOURSELF

"I think a lot of bands are packaged and sold like a commodity," says Mind Funk frontman Pat Dubar. "That's not what music is to me; that MTV fantasy world isn't a place where I particularly want to live. Believe me, I'm not about to sell out my guts, my soul, to make a buck. If someone else wants to do that, fine. Money isn't the be-all, end-all. This is a real sweating, grimacing, angry band, and people are either going to love us or hate us—but they'll never ignore us. That's fine. I don't want sheep for fans."

Unabashed, unrepentant, a riff, a groove and a sudden smash in the teeth. Welcome to the world according to Mind Funk.

Their taut hate and muscular tension underscore a marvelous bit of metallic alchemy: Mind Funk blend the past two decades of stomp 'n' grind influences with a searing power guaranteed to grip you by the ears and simply crush. Their self-titled Epic debut tells only half the tale. As many have witnessed on their tour with the spectacularly unsubtle Motorhead, Mind Funk are a band that bleeds sheer intensity and desperate energy.

That they exist at all is a fluke of curious chemistry. "We were working on riffs, material that would have never worked in our previous situation," recalls bassist John Monte of his and guitarist Louis Svitek's final days under the thrall of portly dictator Billy Milano and his erstwhile outfit M.O.D. "There's only so much you can take of a one-man show. I certainly didn't need someone telling me that everything I worked so hard on wasn't worth shit. The fact was, Billy couldn't sing a lot of it. It got weird, to the point where I started to be skeptical of myself and my abilities. It was time to cruise."

"They were doing the *Surfing M.O.D.* record, and the surfboard broke," Pat deadpans.

Maintaining interest from M.O.D.'s managers, Jonny and Marsha Zazula (also responsible for guiding the career of Anthrax), Monte and Svitek (a veteran of Chicago "street metallers" Zoetrope) were back to square one, seeking a band to quench a yet-unslaked musical thirst. Jason Coppola, a bandmate of John's in the totally obscure Chemical Waste, was recruited on rhythm guitar in fall of '89. Mind Funk's power throne was filled scant months later by Reed St. Mark, drummer with the most respectable incarnation of Swiss avant-metallers Celtic Frost. Like his bandmates-to-be, St. Mark had exited Frost dissatisfied, and was on the cusp of a career in modeling and acting (he once appeared on the popular daytime soap *All My Children*) when the Mind Funk offer came up.

"It's hard to talk about Tom, personally," the drummer says of his years with tyrannical Frost mainman Tom G. Warrior. "My leaving had to do with his questionable decision-making and his constantly reminding us that Celtic Frost was *his* band. Had we maintained the level of quality that was the hallmark of the first three Celtic Frost records, there would be the possibility for growth beyond *Into the Pandemonium*. I wish we could have done a bit more, gone in a bit healthier direction than *Cold Lake*. Tom's shortsightedness and need for immediate gratification had a lot to do with that incarnation of the band falling apart.

"With Mind Funk, there was a very real fertility there," Reed continues. "At the time I had to make a serious choice between the embryonic stages of this band and a thespian lifestyle. I think I made the right decision."

When Dubar, ex-skinhead frontman for West Coast hardcore legends Uniform Choice, came to the group through a tip from a journalist friend of the band's, the chance combination seemed unstoppable. "It wasn't at all what I had expected," the singer points out. "I wasn't at all from the metal side of things, so when I heard I was getting into a band with two guys from M.O.D. and a guy from Celtic Frost, I was like, 'Great, I'm going to try out for a death-metal joke band!' At the time I figured it was a free ticket to New York and a chance to hang out with some friends out there."

Besides, he had nothing to lose. The hardcore scene was increasingly wallowing in its own hypocrisy. "You weren't allowed to grow," Dubar explains. "Once we started slowing down, getting a bit more accessible, we were pariahs. Uniform Choice was basically playing in L.A. three times a year and touring the country for maybe three weeks during the summer. I wanted a full-time band, and the other guys looked at it like a hobby.

"It's funny, I never thought in a million years that [Mind Funk] was going to work," he muses. "Then it turned out to be everything I was looking for."

So the frontman uprooted from his wealthy family's Southern California home to relocate 3,000 miles to a cramped New Jersey apartment shared by four total strangers. "It was a move I had to make," Pat reflects. "I guess I could have had a lot of the more 'normal' things in life, but for one reason or another I wasn't into that. I had to go out and make it for myself. There's a song on the album called 'Sugar Ain't So Sweet,' which I wrote about something my father once told me. He came

Gene Ambo

from a poor family in Arkansas with 19 brothers and sisters, and built a future for him and his family. In a lot of ways that gave me the strength to carve my own future. He once told me, 'I've lived where the people piss in the gutter. I've been there, and I can go back. Someone who's never been there, someone who never built their own life, can't go back. That's what I've got over the rest of the world.' He's right. There's something a million times more valuable about attacking life the hard way."

No sooner was their lineup firmly in place than the assault began. With three weeks of rehearsal under their collective belt, Mind Funk was subjected to a trial by fire of visiting record labels, writers, booking agents and producers, all anxious to believe the carpet bombing of hype created by the Zazula's Crazed Management. "It was their way of testing us," Pat recounts. "We had no choice but to blow the industry away. We had to knock people off their seats, onto their asses, at a really early stage of the game. We just went out there, balls out."

An unfair test for a still young, developing band? "We've all worked for everything we've gotten, and if by now we're not up to any challenge they can throw at us, then we'll never be," Dubar shoots back. "Except for Jason, all of us have been struggling in different bands for almost ten years apiece—shit, I've been playing since I was 13! You get to a point where you struggle so much, endure so many shit tours, have so many guns pulled on you when a promoter doesn't want to pay you, you learn what to do, what's expected of you. We've all done our homework in other bands. We didn't play 70 to 100 live gigs before we got signed, because we didn't need to."

Actually, they played seven, packed their bags and headed to Denmark, land of the midnight sun and superb pastries, to record their Epic debut with little-known producer Jan Eliasson.

"The problem is that Mind Funk isn't rock 'n' roll or heavy metal or Santana or the Doors or Metallica or Black Flag—and we definitely don't sound like a mix of M.O.D., Celtic Frost and Uniform Choice," the singer explains. "We're a combination of many different influences, and we didn't want to work with someone versed in one specific musical form. That would be cheating ourselves, selling short certain elements of our sound. We talked with a lot of other producers, mostly bigger names, but in the end we came to the conclusion that what we were looking for was someone who had never done anything even remotely close to what we're about, but who had a sense for an incredibly huge sound. A fresh perspective. Jan was basically a dance-music producer who came from an extremely heavy background. He had played in really heavy jazz fusion bands in the early-'60s, and attacked our music with the same intensity."

Still, Denmark? How could you not call that cushy?

"Believe it or not, it was cheaper," Dubar insists. "The last month and a half we were there, we had no place to live, no car, no nothing. The studio's drum room was my bedroom! We got to live there for a few months and totally get away from all the pressures and interruptions of working in the States."

The results speak for themselves: a brazen sonic assault that plays a thunderous game of ear tag 'cross the proverbial grey matter; a sound that spans the far shores of pain and passion, underscored by Svitek's searing guitar pyro and given an angry, contorted face by Dubar's emotional jackhammer. They swagger, snarl and smile—often in the space of the same song. "Of course you know that the original name was Mind F?!k," says Pat. "You don't need to be a brain surgeon to figure out why that didn't fly."

"People are immediately thrown off by the name," John interjects. "They immediately throw us in with the whole Faith No More/Red Hot Chili Peppers thing. Then they hear us, and we're about the furthest thing from that. Funk isn't just a state of music to us, it's a state of mind."

Mind Funk are pulling off a precarious balancing act at this stage of the game. They reek of the power and promise to get to the stage where they call the shots.

And if they do? "We're taking the original name back," Pat declares. "I don't give a f?!k what anyone else thinks. This is my band, my life. We're the kind of band that you're going to love or hate. Those are the bands that maybe aren't top-sellers, but they demand respect—bands like Soundgarden or the Doors or Sabbath.

"Love us or hate us, we're the sort of band you can fight, dance or f?!k to." •

FRESH BLOOD

So what's in a name? "Everything," smiles I Love You frontman Chris Palmer. "It's an expression of light, an expression of dark. You love your enemy and hate your lover."

"Oooh, heavy," deadpans guitarist Jeff Nolan. "And to think it's synonymous with four sweaty guys."

Life with L.A.'s I Love You is an intriguing duality, an engaging enigma. They crib from the most gloriously unbrushed moments of the '60s, '70s and '80s without getting hung-up on any been-done attitude. Their eponymous Geffen debut is the sort of disc that zigs into riff-heavy, mildly funky, inexorably tuneful territory while zagging into head-wagging, body-swaying bliss. It's music that moves, at once reminiscent of the Velvet Underground, early Deep Purple and '60s garage rock: cutting and lucid, blatantly sexual at its core.

"That was the whole Zeppelin trip, the sexual drum-machine," says Nolan. "It's music that's smooth and warm and wet sounding that just freaks me out. I Love You isn't music made by asexual mannequins—that just leaves you feeling empty. We're the honest, confident, imperfect side of all that."

Ironically, longtime friends Chris and Jeff played in a thrash band together, called the Sinful Pigeons, when they were 17. ("It was very sexually tense," Chris recalls.) They uprooted from their native Florida to relocate amidst Hollywood's prefab rock set, but found themselves too smart and too cool for the Sunset Strip scene. I Love You (rounded out by bassist Mike Kossler and drummer Tom Sweet) opted instead for territory they were familiar with: the alternative clubs and countless van and pick-up truck tours opening for the likes of Red Hot Chili Peppers, Killing Joke and Masters Of Reality. "That was our scene," says Palmer. "We were brought up on the whole punk thing, watching bands like Black Flag making their scene happen for themselves, before the labels realized what was cool and came swooping in."

In I Love You's case, the labels swooped like vultures. Geffen came up winners in what Chris laughingly refers to as "a good, old-fashioned L.A. bidding war." In the interim, before recording their major-label debut, they issued *I Love You Live*, a five song EP produced by Masters Of Reality guitarist Daniel Rey. "At least people weren't asking us if we sounded like Jane's Addiction anymore," smirks Jeff.

Their first single, "Hang Straight Up," is ample proof of that: a fluid groove amidst a psychedelic wash of guitar, it's a potent announcement that I Love You has arrived.

That's what's in a name. —*Mike Gitter*

THE NEIGHBORHOODS

They say good things come to those who wait. If that's the case, then the Neighborhoods are certainly due for an extra-large dose of good fortune. Since the late 1970s the 'hoods have been tearing up audiences —not only in their hometown of Boston, but from coast to coast. After literally hundreds of shows the band's hard work is finally starting to pay off—and in a big way.

With his own group taking a much-deserved break, Aerosmith's Brad Whitford found himself in a Rhode Island recording studio last year, listening to ideas for what was to become the Neighborhoods' new album. Brad quickly realized that he had found the project that would enable him to fulfill a long-held desire to produce another band's record. "I really think that if someone deserves a shot," says a supportive Whitford, "it's the Neighborhoods. These guys have a real magic that just comes rollin' off the stage. To me, it's undeniable."

The next step in spreading the gospel according to the Neighborhoods is to get their message to the masses. Their recently released self-titled album comes equipped with something that the 'hoods have, until now, lacked: the support of a major record company, namely Atlantic-backed Third Stone. Singer/guitarist David Minehan, who formed the band back in 1977, is now starting to see rewards for his undying belief in himself and his band.

"I know we deserve it," says David, "but then again, this means another year of intense work. We've been working real hard up till now on the club level, but we know that this next level is the real opportunity to see if we can really take off."

The Neighborhoods' musical mix is a unique one, combining the best elements of Iggy Pop, Cheap Trick (whose "Southern Girls" the 'hoods play), Aerosmith and R.E.M. into a fiery, punk-edged, beer-swiggin' party band whose legion of loyal fans is now sure to grow. Along with longtime bassist Lee Harrington and new drummer Carl Coletti, David Minehan and the Neighborhoods are finally poised to enjoy some of the success that they deserve. —*Troy J. Augusto*

Are you ready for a good time? Then slip this baby into the deck and roll! Noisy Mama's debut album, *Everybody Has One*, is guaranteed to lift your spirits to new heights. There are good ol' Midwestern drinking songs like "Heart of Stone" and "Little Brown Jug," pumping numbers such as "Dirty Love," and a bit of the blues on "Daddy Long Legs" and "Million Miles." Noisy Mama even throw in some heart and soul on "Long Way Home." You gotta love these guys.

This brash quintet originally formed over half a decade ago in Youngstown, Ohio, and ripped its way through the Midwestern circuit for a few years before getting picked up by ATCO. The band stood out from its peers because it was a little wilder than most, both on and off stage. Take guitarist Dave Scott, for example. "Dave is a lunatic," explains whiskey-throated frontman Paul Skowron. "He's one of those innocent-looking people that just come up and bite you on the ass. In fact, he did that in a Chi Chi's in Connecticut to our waitress."

Paul's no slouch himself. When ATCO A&R man Mark Ross came down for a gig, the singer gave him a memorable night on the town. "I took him to a titty bar down the street, and then we take off, go to a couple other bars, come back, pick everybody up and go to this radio station's house. We stayed there 'til seven in the morning. And *then* Mark Ross had to drive us home!"

The group wound up showcasing for the label's president and snagging a deal. But, as guitarist James Gumina told Paul, there was a catch. "Jimmy calls me and says, 'You sittin' down? You're an ATCO recording artist.' So that was that. Then he says, '*But* only three of us are!' "

So the three of them moved to New York in search of a new rhythm section. They found bassist Chris Merullo ["He was in a Massachusetts band," says Paul. "He called it the Sinking Ships, but they were called the Floating Boats."] and drummer Tom Rich. "When we completed the lineup," Paul continues, "that two-room apartment just started smelling too bad with five guys in it." As a result, Noisy Mama decided to move to the Poconos. "We call it Mama Manor," Paul relates. "It's a pink house, right next to the beer distributor in Stratford."

Noisy Mama's lust for life is infectious. "Take life seriously...but don't take life seriously," is Paul's favorite expression. "There's so much shit going on, how can you worry about all of it?" he reasons. "Your hair will fall out, or it'll turn gray." In that case, perhaps listening to *Everybody Has One* is even better than taking a drink out of the fountain of youth.

—*Janiss Garza*

NOISY MAMA

BUZZ

Edited by
Shari Sloane

AMBOOG-A-LARD

WEST COAST:

The five-piece band **Icky Joey**, from Seattle, have released their debut LP, *Pooh*, on C/Z Records. The album is a follow-up to their four-song EP, also out on C/Z.... There's a great new thrash band breaking into the Northern California metal scene. The four-song demo by **Void** is available through Undersea Productions, 625 Joanne Way #1, Yuba City, CA 95991.... Orange County's **Cadillac Tramps** have released a new album on the Doctor Dream label, which should make all you soulsters and punksters very happy.... Also recently out on Doctor Dream, the debut *Lovelier Than the Queen of England*, by **Christy McCool**, who are named after their next-door neighbor in Hollywood. Seems Ms. McCool has a reputation for being a "burnt-out, schizophrenic rock diva," who impressed her musician friends when she set her room on fire while smoking filters and watching cartoons.... Check out the new record by **Wild Boyz** (formerly Dorian Gray), out on Polaris Records. The album was produced by Chris Spelling and recorded at Music Grinder Studios in L.A., the former home of Poison and Enuff Z'Nuff.... The L.A. hardcore metal band **Ruined** has released their debut four-song demo, *Inject Neglect*, much to the delight of many a fan.... It seemed every record exec on the planet turned out to see L.A.'s **L.S.D.** (Life, Sex and Drugs) at the Whisky. Will the pyscho-rock outift, led by a Randy Newman-on-crack look-alike, ink a six-figure deal? We'll let ya know.

ICKY JOEY

MID-AMERICA:

The Psychedelic blues band **Black Cat Bone**, from Lexington, KY, have released their debut album, *Truth*, on Coda Records. Check this cool stuff out by contacting the band at P.O. Box 11392, Lexington, KY 40575.... Gene Hadley, formerly of the Nashville band Hard Knox (which has since disbanded), is playing around town in his new combo, **Generation Landslide**.... The popular Cleveland band **ZaZa** has released a CD titled *Party With the Big Boys*, and with it their first single, "Maybe Tomorrow."

EAST COAST:

The Boston band **Hullabaloo** has signed to release their third record on C/Z Records. Their debut for the label, *Lubritorium*, gracefully follows up the release of their prior *Beat Until Stiff*, out on Toxic Shock Records.... **Only Living Witness**, from New Hampshire, has released a 7" EP that will be distributed in the U.S. and Europe through some small independent labels.... Also from New Hampshire, **Terrahsphere** has a new record out, titled *Third in Order of the Sun*, on New Renaissance Records. The over-60 minutes of thrash metal contains, in addition to everything else, their hugely accepted first demo, *Portrait of Reality*.... The band **Wizards**, from Biddeford, Maine, is being widely commended these days for their efforts earlier this year in serving the troops of Operation Desert Storm troops. Twenty thousand BASF cassette tapes were donated by Shape, Inc. and BASF Corporation Information Systems, and sent to the Middle East, all containing the patriotic song "Stand Up." Blank, except for Wizard's tune, the tapes provided the perfect opportunity for the soldiers to communicate with friends and family back home. Now that's the spirit!... We are very pleased to announce the signing of Miami, Florida's **Young Turk** to a recording contract with Geffen Records. Congratulations!... We mentioned in a previous column just how cool Miami's **Amboog-a-lard** are, but forgot to run their very cool photo—sooo sorry.... Ex-Overkill drummer Rat Skates is doing very well in New Jersey with his very cool band **Bomb Squad**.... The New York rock band **Ancestors** played selections from their new album, *The Enemies Dance*, at Carnegie Hall—with the New York City Symphony, no less. The band, whose record is out on Manhattan Center Records, was the first rock group in five years invited to play with the symphony.

THE GREAT WHITE NORTH:

Hailing from Trois-Rivieres, a "lost city" in Quebec, Canada, the French Canadian death band **Chronical Disturbance** is beginning to emerge and expand from the underground of their hometown.... **Tommy Floyd**, out of Vancouver, B.C., continues to do very well. We just can't say enough about this soon-to-be rock hero of the '90s, who is breaking club attendance records nationwide. Get in touch and find out for yourself by writing c/o TKO Entertainment, P.O. Box 48634 Bentall Centre, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7X 1A3.

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"Cycle Sluts From Hell," the debut album, featuring the first track and video, "I Wish You Were A Beer." Also, "By The Balls," "Speed Queen," and "Conqueress." On Epic/Associated.

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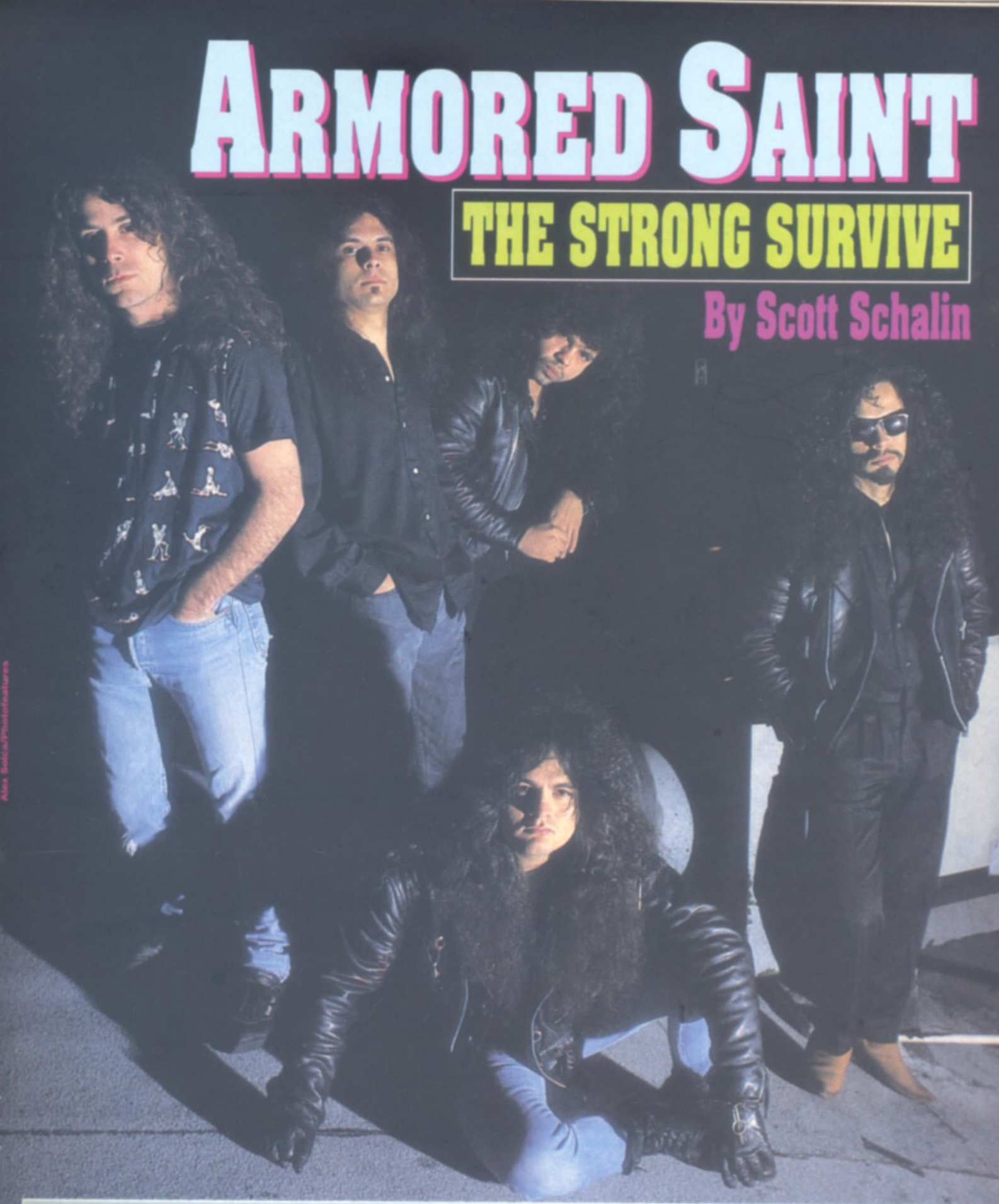
ARMORED SAINT

THE STRONG SURVIVE

By Scott Schalin



I think it was Socrates who said, "It's a long way to the top, if you wanna rock and roll." Anyone who's ever strapped on a Flying V or shuffled up to a microphone knows how frustratingly true those words can be. After years of labor you wake up one day in a cheap motel in the middle of God Knows Where, push aside the crushed remains of last night's beer party, and realize you're hardly better off than on the day you began.

Armored Saint know the feeling—maybe more than most. After overcoming the nagging throb of business and label headaches, they had to deal with the death of a close friend who just so happened to be their lead guitarist, Dave Prichard. With all these unfortunate events, it's amazing that the band even *recorded* a new album, let alone had it turn out to be their strongest to date. Without sounding

Kristin Callahan

maudlin, *Symbol of Salvation* stands proudly as a testimony to the determination of the human spirit.

"Adversity builds character," says Saint frontman extraordinaire John Bush. "If you go through what we have and learn from that, you become stronger as a human being. We went through Dave's death on this album, and it was very, very difficult and very empty. But if you wallow in your sorrow, then you're just going to be a loser."

Saint seemed like anything but a loser in 1983, when they headlined over bands like Metallica, playing a spirited brand of power rock that brought them to the attention of many major labels and snagged them a three-album package with Chrysalis. Fate, it seemed, had dealt them a lucky hand.

But when the band's first album for that label, *March of the Saint*, came out sounding a little flat (Bush blames producer Michael James Jackson, who "smoothed everything out and lost all our energy") and sold less than expected, the reality of the business world began to sink in. "Chrysalis Records was probably our biggest mistake," asserts Bush. "We lost control of our career after we signed to them."

Two albums later, one of which was the sadly overlooked classic *Delirious Nomad*, the band was seeing little label support, and was finally dropped in 1987. "We were glad about it," admits bassist Joey Vera. "We felt that we were done with them and could hopefully wipe the slate clean."

As the band shopped around for a new deal, though, they realized the unfortunate stigma of getting the axe.

"We all know that it was the best thing for our career," explains Bush, "but the sad thing about getting dropped is that labels don't want to touch you. But we felt that if people heard the music on this record now, and they didn't know it was Armored Saint, and we called it the Boneheads, [the labels] would pick up on it like flies to shit. We even considered changing our name, but the thing is, here we are in 1991 with this album, which blows away anything we've ever done."

Indeed, where lesser groups might have cursed their fate, packed it in, and committed to a life selling auto parts, Saint stood their ground and increased their determination. *Symbol of Salvation* shows the band benefiting from their struggles and submitting their enlightenment for the listener's approval.

"Our music has always been based on trying to find the positive side of things and turning around the negatives to make life easier," Bush says, basking in the warmth of the afternoon sun. "Positive emanates other positive things. So on this album we said, 'F?!k it,' and bounced right back and became rock solid as a result."

Salvation finds Saint back on the much more supportive Metal Blade label, and shows the band confidently at the top of its form. There's a savage hunger in these cuts, and riffs meaty enough to stick to your ribs like last night's supper. Adding to the heavy sound is the beefy production of Dave Jerden, who's worked with Social Distortion and Red Hot Chili Peppers, and most recently made the Jane's Addiction album such an aural ejaculation.

John Bush, in particular, deserves praise for infusing these songs with such raw emotion. If most of this album doesn't send chills, a pulse check of the listener should be ordered. Bush admits that the passion and spiritual questioning that underscore the album's theme of seeking salvation stem mostly from the recent death of Prichard. When Dave died of leukemia mere weeks before recording began, it not only affected the band's music, but their perspective on death as well.

"We played this one gig, which turned out to be Dave's last, and he was perfectly normal," Bush remembers. "Then a week later he went into the hospital and died within a two-month period. It was pretty bizarre to see the body deteriorate like that."

As with any survivor who has experienced the death of someone close, there's always a feeling of bitterness, especially when that person was so young.

"Everyone asks why he had to die so young

and, believe me, we asked those questions a lot," Bush says softly. "That's what [a new song] 'Hanging Judge' is about—being ready to face your mortality, face death. It's not necessarily negative. Death is overblown. Everybody dies. It doesn't matter if you're a month old or 80. When it's your time, it's your time. I mean, I miss him, and I wish to God he was still here, but I feel that he must've lived a full life, and it must've been over by then. That's the way you gotta look at it, or else the bitterness will eat you up. And a lot of that is just selfishness. You gotta say, 'Hey, you were awesome.' "

"When you die, the body and shell leave," interjects Vera, "but the human being inside is always with us, and no one can take that away. Dave was amazing. He touched millions, and he will touch more in time, I guarantee it."

The lineup for this album sees the reemergence of the dual-guitar attack missing since *March of the Saint*. Phil Sandoval (drummer Gonzo's older brother), who left the band after that album, has now returned to take his original place alongside former Odin axeman Jeff Duncan.

Despite the unfortunate need to fill the guitar void, Vera is quick to point out that neither Duncan nor Sandoval has been hired as a replacement for Prichard.

"With Phil, the opportunity to come back with us was very appealing to him," he explains. "The best thing for us to do was create the most comfortable and natural situation. We went through auditions of many guitarists, but there was always one thing lacking, and that was the feeling of being together with a group of guys you trust and have known for a long time. Jeff we had known for about five years, and had worked with a little after the live EP [1988's *Saints Will Conquer*]. He would never try to be Dave. He sets up on the same side of the stage, but that's about as far as it goes."

Although Dave may be gone, his musical touch, which always represented the transcendent quality of the Saint sound, can be felt throughout *Symbol of Salvation*. Prichard not only composed the melodies and solos for many of the tracks before he died, he also wrote the album's first single, "Reign of Fire." As a matter of fact, he even plays on the seven-minute emotional epic "Tainted Past," which may be the most perfect Armored Saint track ever.

"There's Dave all over this album," says Bush proudly. "'Tainted Past' is a song that Joey and [engineer] Bryan [Calstrom] slaved five hours over, getting Dave's solo off the demo."

"I transferred the four-track demo over to a two track, and bit by bit punched in Dave's solos to fit in time with the new version of the song," explains Vera, obviously moved by the recollection. "The one thing Dave cared about most, other than living, was playing. To him, playing *was* living, and he wanted to play on this record very badly. In fact, he even talked about postponing his operation in order to play on this album. So this was the least I could do, to see that dream come true."

It's precisely that sense of loyalty in this day of prissy rockers who can't even share a bus that makes Armored Saint such a rare find. A perfect example of that allegiance was Vera's refusal to join Metallica when bassist Cliff Burton died after *Master of Puppets*. It was a difficult decision for Vera, especially in light of the success of that album, which would've assured him smooth monetary sailing for the rest of his life.

"Believe me, I thought about it hard," he says, smiling. "Anybody would have. I could have made next month's rent without any worry. But a lot of that stuff became secondary to what was important, and that was my loyalty to this band. We grew up together [in East Los Angeles], and we've known each other forever. My home is here with them. After that long a time it becomes really personal, and I'm not in this for myself. My happiness wouldn't have been over there; my happiness is here. And there's still a lot of business and a lot of goals that have yet to be reached with this project."

As Saint itself ironically prophesied in one of its earliest songs, "On the Way": "Sometimes you'll have to go through hell first, but in the end you'll be at heaven's door." Well, eight years later, it's finally time for this band to turn the knob and enter the kingdom of rock's elite upper class. •

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BY STEFFAN CHIRAZI

EARACHE RECORDS

GRINDCORE, STRAIGHT UP

Napalm Death could not have known what they were starting with their blast-beat drumming, which was beyond even the most extreme ear's comprehension, and those vocals that disgusted most of Death's peers. It was the beginning of a new and brutal genre that's quite literally exploded since then: grindcore. The garage is once again alive and bursting with ingenious ideas and talent, and this is due in no small measure to a quiet British chap by the name of Digby Pearson, the father of Earache Records.

Pearson is primarily a fan. He started Earache as a way of hearing his own favorite grooves, and now the world's biggest one-room indie label has joined forces with Combat/Relativity to blitz America with a series of tours and albums that will frighten the Moral Majority into their ignorant fox-holes once and for all.

The success of this now-internationally renowned indie label, started only four years ago in a Nottingham, U.K., bedroom, is something that surprises not only us, but the 32-year-old Pearson as well. "It started in '86, out of my bedroom. I was pretty much just a grotty little thrash fan. I'd had a go at writing with *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll*, promoted a few shows, worked in a hi-fi store, scrubbed a few floors here and there—pretty average stuff, really. I'd hitch all over Britain to see bands like Discharge [who were gods, it has to be said]. In '82/'83, they were the real thing. No one was doing what they were doing, and they basically invented thrash, as far as I'm concerned. Before them, I'd been into punk—I actually thought metal was just a load of old bullshit—and it was the Damned and Sex Pistols that got me into it, and later on Killing Joke, until Discharge came along.

"Metal didn't even come into the picture until Metallica and Slayer came along, maybe Venom too. You'd see Venom, Slayer, Metallica, and there were more punks at the shows than metal fans. And hardcore thrash was really taking off. D.R.I. came out of that and did some stuff with their own label. It was in the mid-'80s that you started to see the metal and hardcore kids getting into each other's music."

What band motivated Earache's start?

"Well, I started doing flexi-records before that," explains Digby. "One of the first was with Septic Death, Pushead's old band [famed artist, best-known for his Metallica work]. He really helped me get started. He gave me connections, phone numbers, and just helped me get going in the early days, when I didn't have a clue as to what was going on. So that was given away in *Thrasher* magazine. Then I did a band called the Stupids and an Australian band, Civil Dissident. Hirax were on one. Then we got into proper albums. One had a band called Heresy, and Concrete Sox, and then there was an album from the Seattle hardcore band the Accused.

"In the real beginning we had a lot of press support from *Thrasher* and *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll*. Nowadays *Maximum* probably hates what we put out, because we 'sold out' somewhere along the line. It's a problem being a label like this and being accused of selling out just because you start to sell records," sighs Digby. "Napalm Death's first album is a

prime example. It was the third record I released, called *Scum*. It cost 300 pounds to record, and you don't even do demos for that now. It's now sold about 50,000 copies in Europe, and it gets a U.S. release right about now. But it wasn't this big plan we hatched; it really just happened. However, some people in certain scenes will always have a problem with records selling that much on labels like this."

Before anyone knew what was going on, a U.K. TV program on heavy metal focused more on Napalm Death than on such celebrated artists as Jon Bon Jovi. It was attention you couldn't believe. Former label manager Martin Nesbitt explains: "The producers had this brainwave to show the start of metal as having been Black Sabbath, out of Birmingham, and the nail in metal's coffin being Napalm Death, also from Birmingham. It was this full-circle thing. They met the band and really liked them, because they were normal kids who were really nice. The old guard of metal, like Motorhead, I think, just were not into so much time being spent filming these kids in their bedrooms, talking about tape trading. It's something the old guard just does not understand."

"The tape-trading underground back in the early-'80s was vital," Digby says. "Essentially that's what Earache Records is all about. We're a bit more organized about it now, but it's still the same thrill of wanting to let other people know about these bands. A lot of suggestions and signings come via bands

MORBID FANS

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Mark Lewisohn

already on the label. Napalm might tell us about this great band, or Morbid [Angel] might go on about this killer act we need to hear."

Indeed, one Earache band, Mighty Force, were first seen at a Napalm Death show, when one member bumped into Pearson and Nesbitt via a stage-dive with a massive gash in his head.

So, from hardcore and thrash, things wound their way around to the death-metal ways of bands such as the superb Entombed from Sweden and the mega-mighty Morbid Angel out of North Carolina/Florida. How did Earache get there? "Well, it's an extension of the crossover between metal and punk," explains Digby. "You don't have to be a rich kid with a big Marshall stack paid for with the parents' credit card. You just get whatever you can, however old it is, get in the garage, and bang it out. That's what it's all about."

"The first time I heard about Earache Records, and even before that, when I read European press and *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll*, I was blown away," gurgles Combat label manager Jim Welch. It is Welch who's responsible for ensuring the Earache/Combat deal got its place in the U.S., and this is due to his unbending belief in the music and its energy. Jim Welch is simply another 24-year-old fan bringing grindcore to you. "The extremity is what gets people going. Something this heavy, this extreme, and this crushing is always gonna get people going, and it will always get more extreme. When I first heard Possessed's *Seven Churches*, I thought, 'Will it get any heavier and faster than this?' and now look."

Mark Leialoha

The other step is to see just how slow and grindy bands can get. Welch is already watching that happen. "We're going to have a band out called Cathedral, featuring Lee Dorien, who was formerly in Napalm Death. It's so slow and so tuned down, but what was Lee gonna do next? It's the total opposite of his Japcore yelling vocals. Here he sounds like a dying old man. It's pretty insane.

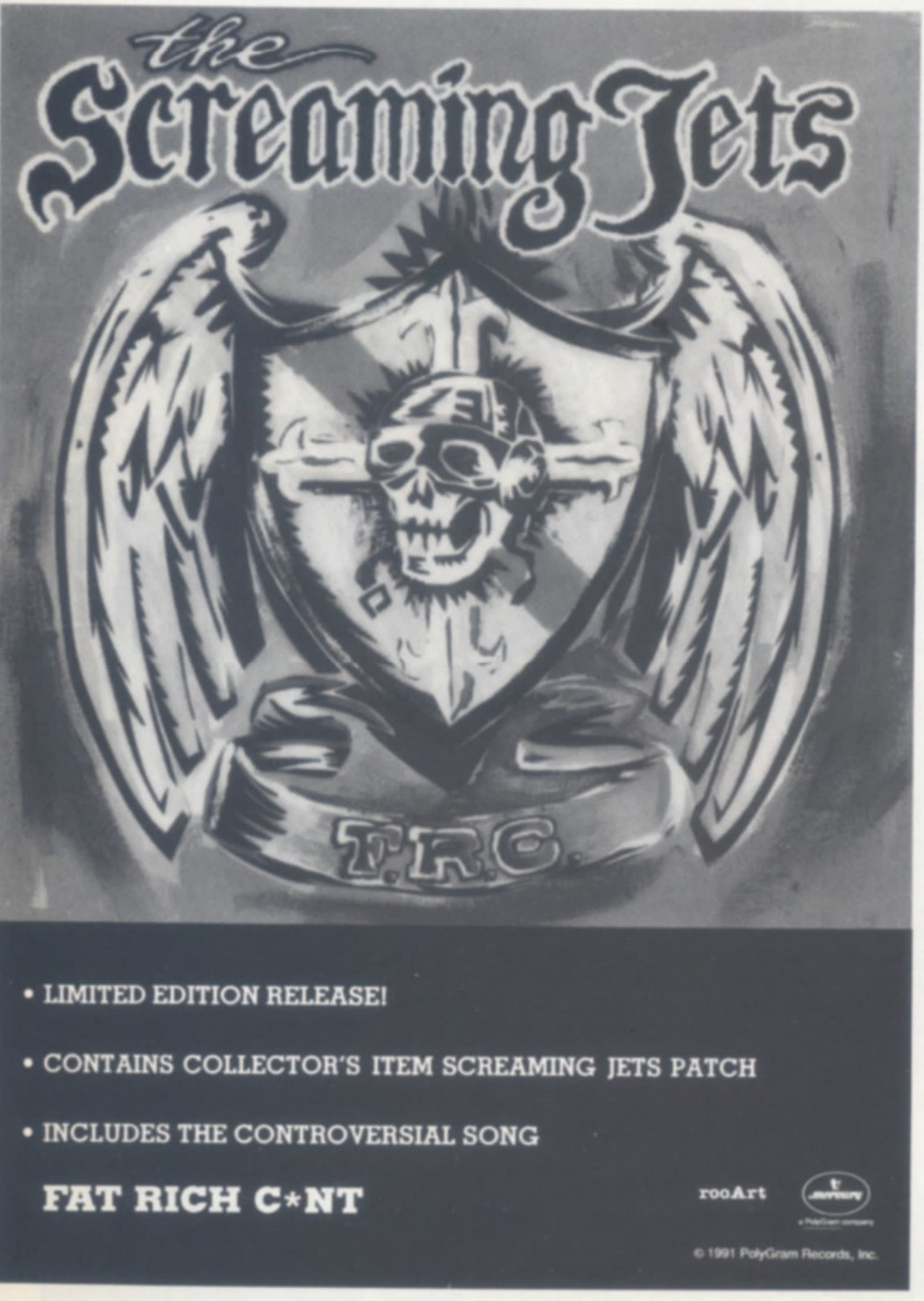
"When I first went to Combat with this idea, they were, of course, skeptical, but they've always been a 'Hey, let's go with it' company. Still, I don't think even they were aware of how far this thing was really gonna go. I mean, it is the next wave of street music right now. It's getting out there. It's going really well."

In essence, Earache Records is a label founded upon the same gut feelings and principles as Rick Rubin's Def American label (and Def Jam before that), right down to the bedroom being the first office.

"As far as I'm concerned, Rick Rubin is the man," agrees Digby. "When Def Jam started, I was a massive fan of that label. The bullshit part of it, the hype, is something else, and he's just another fan at heart. I'm proud to hear the label compared to his."

Here are some exciting new releases coming up from Earache/Combat for all you grindcrushers: Morbid Angel's superb *Blessed Are the Sick*, Swedish death geniuses Entombed with *Clandestine*, original deathsters Massacre with *From Beyond*, and a new 12-inch from Napalm Death, *Mass Appeal Madness*, as well as a weird, swirly affair from Fudge Tunnel titled *Hate Songs in E Minor*. Unable to choose? Then check out the great value *Grindcrusher: The Ultimate Earache*, which is perfect for those wanting to sample the full range of Earache's aural wares.

This genre, and indeed this label, is here to stay. •



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OZZY OSBOURNE MEMOIRS OF A MADMAN

BY STEFFAN CHIRAZI

Not for the first time, I find myself staring into the eyes of Ozzy Osbourne and trying to work out just what the hell is really going on behind them. It's tough to tell. Maybe it's best I don't know. A legend whose legacy stretches some 22 years, Ozzy always seems haunted by things from his past, unable to shake certain demons. It is intriguing to take a long look into his wild eyes and try, just try, to imagine what it's all about.

"At this point in the game, my old son, I can't even begin to tell you," he sighs. "I can't start anywhere. It's just a lot of pain and many things, and I...ahh, give me a break, y'know?"

Yet do not be fooled. Ozzy Osbourne is not the monster they tell you about in the papers or on the news. He is a kind and gentle man who's happy spending time at home. In this case that's a house in L.A., but he'd really be much happier in his English country mansion. His only struggle now is getting his latest album finished without it dragging out too much longer.

When we meet up, Osbourne is in a particularly honest and robust mood, wasting no time on deviations, getting straight to the point. We start talking after I've heard some of the new album, perhaps Ozzy's most revealing material yet and a definite step back to the *Blizzard of Ozz* days, with keyboard and piano segues uniting thunderous riffs and those unique Osbourne vocals. It's another unexpected feint from a man whom everybody expects things from.

"I have to interest myself more than anybody else. With the last album I ended up making a record that everybody else liked, and I forgot about me at times; whereas with this album I have to say that I'm totally involved 100% with it, to the point that it's drivin' me mad." A nice form of madness compared to some though. "Well, it is, yes, but it's so f?!kin' frustrating—at least it is for me. All they expect of Ozzy Osbourne is the man who bites heads off bats and kills things. That happened in 1982! Give me a break! It's time to get real, y'know. I am a person. I have made mistakes, and I have been successful, and right now in my life I'm just trying to make the best album I possibly can. I sit up night after night listening to this tape [points at a cassette of new material in a boom box], trying to comb the thing, and the album's making itself. If the songs are strong, the album's gonna make it; if they ain't, the album sucks. I can only do my best."

As mentioned, there's a lot more experimentation and stretching out on this album than Ozzy's tried in quite some time. The result of not listening to others anymore?

"Exactly. I began to believe in my own ego, in my own persona. What people expected of Ozzy, I would deliver, and it became boring to me! I haven't put so much emotion into an album for a long time, but once you get onto a wave, you've gotta go with that wave. I haven't really liked an album of mine for a while now. I liked the last one somewhat in places. I didn't like *The Ultimate Sin* at all. I was very disappointed with it, as it was taken out of my hands. It became a Ron Nevison production. John [Purdell] and Duane [Baron], who are producing this album, are like a part of the team, two extra members of the band, and even though that's taxing on me, it's so much better."

Part of the energy spent has been due to the changes in both producers and direction this latest Ozzy project has taken.

"Bob Rock was involved at one point. What I can't get there is, if he didn't wanna do the project, then why did he string me out for three months? He chose Dave Lee Roth over me, which is fine, but why didn't he turn around and tell me that right off? And then I tried to get on with Thompson and Barbiero." His face screws up at the thought. "They were a joke! A f?!king joke! Nothing but a f?!king joke. All they would tell me is that they didn't need me anyway, 'cause they were gonna mix the next Guns N' Roses album! [Which didn't happen. Bill Price mixed *Use Your Illusion*.] And then I met up with Rick Rubin, who is nothing but a diamond, a great guy. The heart was there, but the chemistry wasn't. Rick Rubin's an eccentric. He wants to go totally off-the-wall, and if it had been 20 years ago, we'd have got on like a house on fire. We do get along, but after nurturing this album for so long, I wasn't prepared to scrap what I had and start again, because I believed in the songs I had. He's really into old Sabbath anyhow, the rawness, which is not a bad thing, but it just isn't where I'm at. He's the only one who's ever got me to reconsider joining Sabbath again, and I got offered a lot of money, believe me, a lot. I make no bones: For me to consider doing it again, I'd *need* a lot of money. He got me nearer than anyone has, but then I realized I just don't want that."

There's a line in one of the new songs, "The wreckage of my past keeps haunting me." When will he finally be free of old ghosts?

"Well, you never get away from your past; you can only try and change your future. You can only try and be a better person. The song you're referring to is self-explanatory."

What are the things you can't shake?

"The fact that I was a failure as a husband to my first wife; the fact that I can't be with my children when I wanna be with them. I live for my children, I live for them all. I'm a crazy guy; I always will be. I'm f?!king mad, and I know that. That's what keeps me going. My madness keeps me alive. My madness keeps me here. My madness keeps me writing songs. I mean, thank God I'm Ozzy."

We talk further about the pressure of making an album.

"In this day and age making an album is not an easy task. We all strive for perfection. What happens is that you get successful, you get amenities, and you wanna experiment with yourself. When you consider that Black Sabbath's first album was done with two four-track machines bounced over in 12 hours.... We drove down from Birmingham in our truck, got out and played our music, got back in the truck, and went to Switzerland for six weeks. It cost nothing to make, yet it is one of the finest albums ever made. It still, to this day, stands up. But as success comes, you have to investigate. You'll never know unless you try it out. It's a thing you have to do, a compulsion. You think to yourself, 'I did that in an hour. If I spend 300 hours, I could get 300 times better than what I had before.' Temptation's what you're talking about. It's like a kid in a candy store."

Osbourne is certainly doing some investigations with his studio work these days.

"That's the only way I can do it these days, to make me feel comfortable, because when I tread on unsure ground and win,

Gene Kirkland

then it's so much more surprising. Winning is when I'm happy with it and the world's happy with it. It's like painting a picture. I'm sure Leonardo da Vinci, when he painted the *Mona Lisa*, thought, 'I wonder if anybody else will like it?' On this album, I'm liking it, but it's a nightmare to get done. I walk two feet, get knocked back two miles, but I get up off my arse and take the challenge."

One of the songs on the album Ozzy wrote the lyrics for (Lemmy of Motorhead wrote most of them) was about a child molester. He looks forlorn in expectation of future problems from his old friends in the Moral Majority.

"I'll probably get sued for that. They'll claim I'm advocating child molestation! But let me tell you, if anyone ever came near any of my children, I would not hesitate to buy a gun and blow their f?!kin' head off. I just read a book called *True Crime*, and some of the stuff is unbelievable. What depths people will stoop to, what they'll do, is beyond my capacity of thought. How can anyone take somebody's baby and molest it? It's sick. I just think people are perverted, and mankind is the worst animal in this world."

We talk more about the album before Ozzy

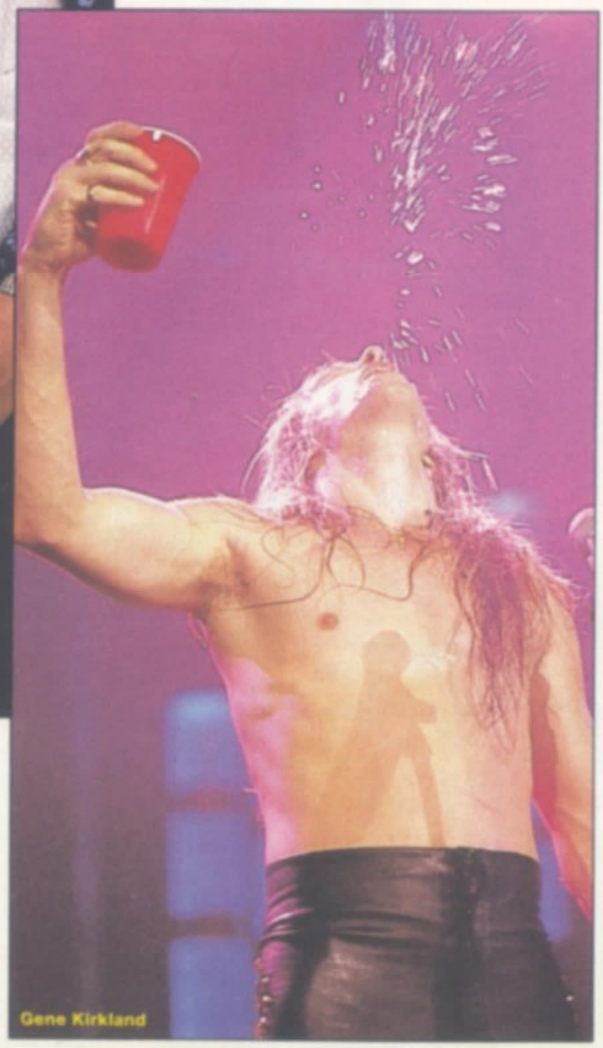
makes a concrete announcement.

"After this album there's gonna be no more Ozzy albums, because I wanna be in a band. I don't wanna be 'Ozzy' no more, just a member of a band. This is my last Ozzy album. because I am sick of trying to live up to a reputation that doesn't belong to me. Them out there [the business/press] think they know who I am, and they haven't got a clue who I am. My own publicity campaigns created it, and I'm not really complaining about that, but I became the monster of all monsters. See, I don't wanna be that monster now. I'm a different man, and I wanna be in a band."

Much has been made of Ozzy's alcoholism in the past, and this is partly due to the fact that Osbourne is always the first to tell you about it. He has made the choice to live with it, drink a few beers, and get on with things... for now anyhow. I just hope to God it doesn't take him away forever.

"I can't really function [without booze]. I get thin. I lose weight, and people say, 'Oooh, Ozzy, you've lost a lotta weight,' but I'm bored as f?!k! Every one of us has a quirk and an unsociable point, and it isn't a problem to me, because I just f?!king drink! I get f?!ked up! If it kills me, I don't care! I mean, in this day and age, everybody's trying to save you and save me and save them—f?!k them, save your own arse, man, and I'll look after mine." [At press time, Ozzy was back on the wagon again.]

Comfort yourselves with the knowledge that Ozzy is about to release his most interesting and involved album in years. He says that this week it's called *Say Hello to Heaven*. They'll never take Ozzy Osbourne away from us. He'll leave when he's damn well good and ready to. •



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GUNS

HERE TODAY,

N' ROSES

GONE TO HELL (AND LOVIN' IT)

"This is the most highly organized unorganized bunch of people in the whole world," declared a semi-sarcastic/semi
serious W. Axl Rose during soundcheck at San Francisco's Warfield Theater, prior to Guns N' Roses' first U.S. gig of 1991.
The band had originally planned a mini club tour—a series of warm-up shows for their Get In The Ring, Motherf?!ker
tour, which Skid Row opens—that would've taken them to places like Seattle, Detroit, Dallas, and other hip cities. In a per
fect world, this jaunt would've gone down without any hitches, but this is the world of GN'R. A host of problems, pres-
sures and assorted other bullshit prompted the band to cut the club dates to just three—San Francisco, L.A. and New
York—in order to deal with more pressing matters. For starters, the band was about to embark on its first major headlining

Another RIP Exclusive
By Del James

tour without a record in stores. Slash, Duff and Geffen A&R man Tom Zutaut spent the week prior to the Warfield show in New York City, busily mastering GN'R's forthcoming two-album monstrosity, *Use Your Illusion, Vols. 1 & 2*. Axl waded through personal and band-related issues, specifically huddling with cohort Josh Richman on schematics for the "Don't Cry" video. GN'R's personal photographer, Robert John, had less than half an hour to shoot the album's back cover—something he'd been working on for over a month. And, to top off everything, Stravinsky Brothers Management, which had been overseeing the Gunners' affairs since late '86, parted ways with manager Alan Niven, who still handles Great White. Niven's partner, Doug Goldstein, now manages Gun N' Roses exclusively. (Was he a mass murderer in a past life, or what?). Ironically, his company is called BFD. Business as usual in the GN'R camp.

The band has been rehearsing for several weeks—minus Axl. "Part of the reason I don't go to rehearsals is, I like to go all out. If the band's not going out at the same intensity —they're concentrating more on getting the music right—I feel like an idiot, jumping around, taking it so serious," explains Axl, who does daily vocal exercises alone or with his vocal coach, Ron Anderson. The site of these rehearsals is an airplane hangar containing their massive, must-be-seen-to-be-appreciated new stage setup. Not to give anything away, let's just say *intense* is an understatement when describing it.

Guns, as much as they might tend to complain about the downside of touring, the grind, the legal hassles and hysteria that seem to surround them more than any other rock band going, the physical and mental pressures, etc., really love their fans. Sounds corny, I know, but once you've known the guys awhile, you realize to what extent GN'R and their organization go to make sure the fans don't get cheated or ripped off in any way, shape or form. They even keep tallies on ticket counts, so that shady promoters and scalping agencies can't buy up blocks of tix, thus forcing fans to purchase them at overblown prices, and keep tabs on magazine interviews to make sure what they're selling is current and accurate. But the way Guns get to give the most back to their fans is through the music. And when it comes to live performances, when Guns N' Roses are on, no other rock band comes close! Here's an informal, behind-the-scenes look at what the boys have been going through lately.

THURSDAY, LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT: One of the many nuisances of touring, especially after several months on the road, is traveling by bus. The cramped living and sleeping conditions, the constant drone of 18 wheels rumbling, the boredom.... So, creative lot that they are, Guns got a plane—but not just any plane with their logo painted on the side: GN'R chartered the ultimate flying experience, the MGM Grand. Axl has been known in the past to have a difficult time making

flights, but rumor at the terminal had it he was on his way. Guess what? Ax man, who was battling a slight case of strep throat, was early! Things were definitely off to a good start. Of the six bandmembers, only three—Axl, drummer Matt Sorum and keyboardist/percussionist Dizzy Reed—were flying. Duff and Slash would be arriving from NY, and Izzy, who doesn't particularly like to fly (which is not too hard to understand, considering some of the problems he's had in the past), bought himself a tour bus, so he can tow his Harleys and bring his dog. Now that the band have private use of the finest flying machine going, it somehow makes sense, in a very Izzy way, that he'd buy his own bus. Go figure.

On the flight to San Francisco, the stewardess asked what video we'd like to watch. No one had thought to bring any, so she started rattling off titles. "How about *All About Eve*?" Dizzy and I cheered, thinking it was a porno. Turns out it's a black-and-white classic. Shit happens.

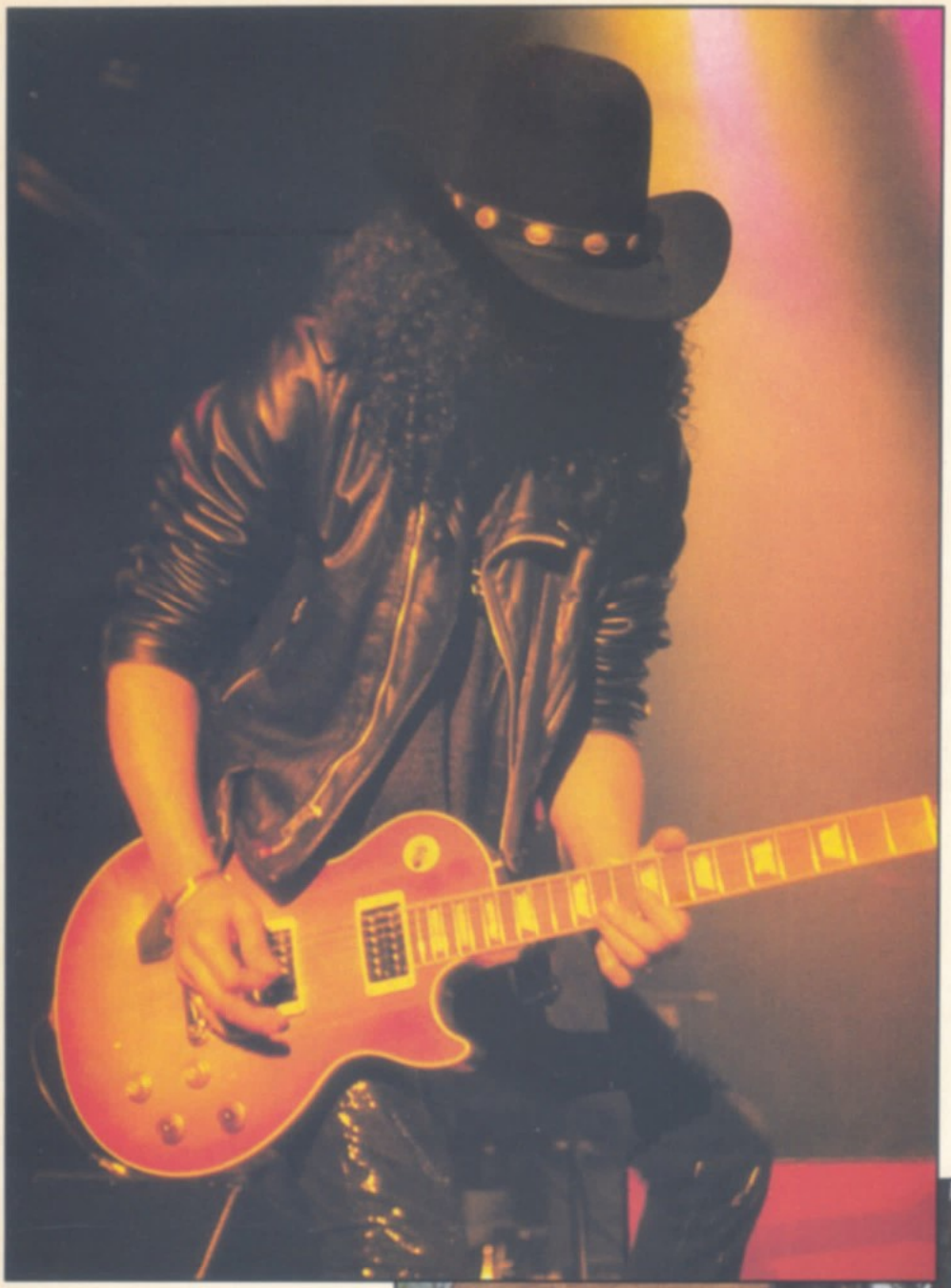
THURSDAY, WARFIELD THEATER: Early that morning, 8:00 a.m. or so, Slash and Duff called the local rock radio station and announced that GN'R would be playing a one-off gig that night. Fans flocked to the venue, and within an hour all the tickets were sold. Among the early birds milling about on the street was none other than an incognito Izzy Stradlin, looking like one of NWA or Public Enemy's homeboys with his dark shades, L.A. Raiders cap, and hooded sweat jacket up over his head.

"It was insane, man. All those kids that early in the morning," reflected Izzy in his tuning room, while a Bob Marley cassette blared away. "I can't wait till we finally go on."

After a well-received set from L.A. noise kings Dumpster, a four-piece whose sound and style bring to mind images of Fear, the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Motorhead, the Warfield was buzzing with anticipation. Many of these loyal GN'R diehards had been waiting over ten hours for this. Opening with "Pretty Tied Up," Guns N' Roses cruised through a two-hour set that was 80% new material. New tunes like "Bad Obsession," the brutal "Perfect Crime," "Dust and Bones," "Live and Let Die," "Knocking on Heaven's Door," "Yesterdaze" and "Double Talkin' Jive" mixed perfectly with "Out Ta Get Me," "Mr. Brownstone," "It's So Easy" and "Welcome to the Jungle." Another highlight of the evening was when Slash broke out of a guitar solo

RIP

GUNS N' ROSES



and into "Happy Birthday," while Axl dragged Doug Goldstein onstage. Red-faced and highly uncomfortable, Goldstein made it through the song before quickly exiting stage left. Another not-so-highlight occurred during "Paradise City," when Duff attempted a stage dive, and an overanxious security guard grabbed his legs as he was in mid-flight, causing him to eat it, face first. One of the gig's highest points was the haunting, set-ending song, which Axl introduced like this: "As the Stones would say, this song is about a girl who's just a memory. It's called 'Estranged.' "

The fans, who had never heard most of these songs, were singing their lungs out by the second chorus.

"It's real cool when people are singing songs they don't really know," Axl said later. "I work on communicating it to them, and they take the time to get into it. I like the intimacy, and I think the crowd likes the intimacy of us showing them our new songs."

Although highly intense energy-wise, the set suffered a bit from lack of cohesiveness. Certain tunes went down smooth as silk; others still needed to have the bugs worked out of them. But an off night or average gig for Guns is still better than most other acts going. Besides, what d'ya want for their first show? As Slash explained to the crowd, part of the reason they chose to do the gig was that when GN'R was a club band, they'd play songs their fans had never heard before, and if the fans liked what they heard, they'd be received well; so this was sort of a testing ground. He also went on to add that the Warfield was one of the few remaining venues that offered concertgoers a full bar, not just beer. What a guy!

Backstage after the show, Axl asked me what I thought of that night's performance.

"Honestly?" I responded.

"Yeah."

"It was a seven out of a possible ten."

He didn't really respond, but judging from the look on his face, I think he appreciated my honesty.

SATURDAY, LOS ANGELES, PANTAGES THEATER: Pandemonium breaks out again! Using the same formula as before, Slash and Duff called radio station KLOS and announced the "secret"—which, even before 'Frisco, was not much of a secret—and the show was an immediate sellout. Most of the prominent members of the L.A. music community, from industry heads to journalists to musicians, were eager to see what GN'R had to offer, with many skeptics secretly hoping they would fall flat on their faces. Also, the entire Guns N' Roses family of friends was there. Once again Dumpster held their own, reaffirming their claim as one of L.A.'s top club acts. It's only a matter of time

George Chin/Venegas

before these guys get the record deal they deserve. Then, as the lights dimmed, the Pantages Theater exploded as the moment everyone had been anticipating arrived.

Opening with "Right Next Door to Hell," GN'R launched into a set that saw many of the kinks from the previous gig ironed out. The band onstage tonight was a lot more confident and firmly in control of the harder-to-please—yes, stuck-up—L.A. audience. "Mr. Brownstone," "Dust and Bones" and "Civil War" followed. Then Axl said, "This next number is my favorite song of the set, because I don't have to sing, and I can kick back and watch the guys. It features Slash Corleone Guido Sarducci on guitar. This is something we call 'Godslobber.' " Slash took his cue and started soloing, then the band slowly kicked in with their interpretation of the theme from *The Godfather*. "Pretty Tied Up" and an awesome version of "Live and Let Die" followed. "14 Years," a number that features Izzy Stradlin on lead vox, was next. Then came "Yesterdaze" and "Double Talkin' Jive," which has turned into one of GN'R's heaviest jams. The show continued with "Patience," during which Axl jumped off stage and ran through the audience, winding up at the sound board, where he sang the finale of the song. There is nothing choreographed, nothing planned, and nothing contrived about a Guns N' Roses show. Hell, they don't even have a set list, but rather a "pick list" of 30-plus songs they can choose from each evening, according to whatever mood hits 'em.

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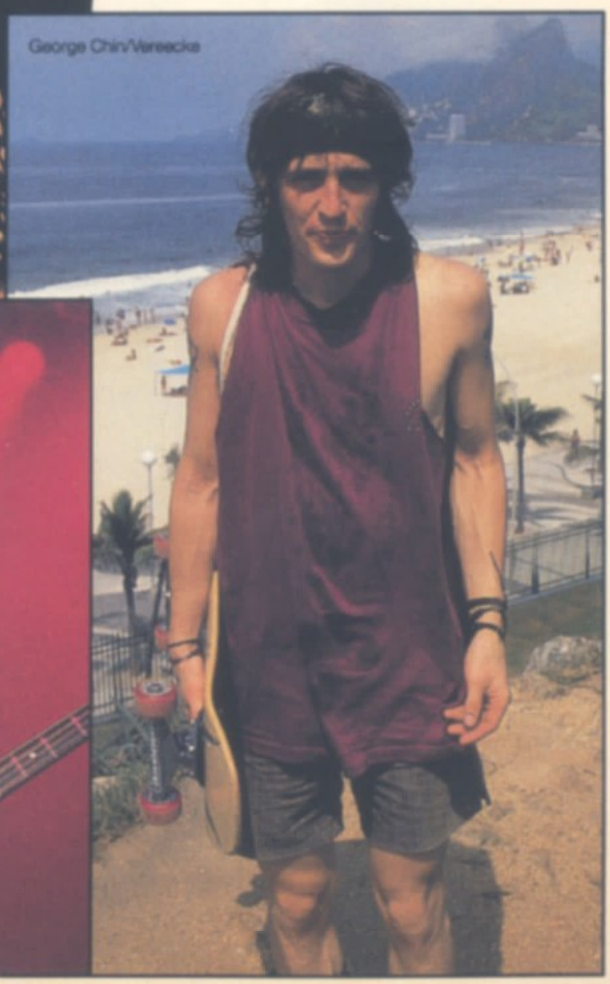
Next up, a blistering Matt Sorum drum solo rocked the rafters off the Pantages, with a little help from Duff McKagan on timbals. "The drum solo is great," Sorum explained later. "I never got to do one when I was with the Cult. Actually, I never did one before Rio. Hopefully they'll keep getting better. It's really cool of the guys for letting me do it."

Duff let Sorum cut loose a little longer before returning with his bass, and then the duo got into a funk groove. Slash joined the jam, and pretty soon GN'R had done what no one else would dare: go from "Patience," into a drum solo, into a funk jam, into an all-out, balls-out rock jam that turned into "Rocket Queen."

"Knocking on Heaven's Door," complete with sing-along, was next, and right before the last song (before the encores) Axl explained that "Estranged" featured pianist Dizzy Reed. The band then launched into the song, which can only be described as a classic.

Returning after a brief break, the band got into the first of their two encores. They started with "Bad Apples," then Axl called up a close friend, Shannon Hoon, from Capitol recording artists Blind Melon, and they sang "You Ain't the First." "It's So Easy" ended the series. The second encore started off with "Bad Obsession," then Axl called Hoon back onstage, and the pair duetted, like they do on *Illusion*, on "Don't Cry." "Sweet Child o' Mine" ended the evening. After the show Guns threw a party for several hundred of their friends, but I didn't stick around. The two-hour-and-ten-



George Chin/Vereecke

minute show had drained me. Instead, I rang Axl's hotel and left a message: "Getting better. Eight and a half."

WEDNESDAY, LAX, EN ROUTE TO NY: The vibe on the plane was relaxed. The band knew they were getting better, and that these much-needed gigs were paying off in spades. Everyone in the band (except Izzy) was there, as well as Goldstein's inner circle—which makes sure the GN'R machine rolls smoothly—and a few close friends of the band.

"I'm really happy with the way things are going," Axl said. "Professional rehearsals in front of people. It allows me to get into the mode I'm gonna have to be in when we start doing the big shows. Frisco and Bill Graham were real cool, and there was a different kind of hunger there for us. L.A. seemed to scrutinize us a bit more, and I welcome that. In L.A. we didn't play 'Jungle' or 'Paradise,' because we'd already played for over two hours. I didn't want to push my voice any harder. Also, we didn't want to push past the curfew and be fined eight grand for one song. It felt a little bit like I ripped some people off, but I knew they were happy with what we had done. I thought we went over real well in L.A., but I still look at it as rehearsals. I'm not really worried about what critics have to say about these gigs, but if they like these shows, in six months they'll be real happy."

I've had the privilege of listening to the new GN'R material for quite some time now, and certain tunes have become personal favorites—"Estranged," "Coma," "Locomotive," "November Rain," "Pretty Tied Up." One has to wonder what it's like for Axl to sing the new material in comparison to the older stuff.

"On songs I'm supposed to know like the back of my hand, I start spacing out and thinking of other things. I prefer to do the new stuff. I love singing 'Yesterdaze.' 'Right Next Door to Hell' is a blast! I'm just feeling my way through the songs right now. You know when you're at a party, and you put on an old song that's a favorite from another band? Well, we get to play that old song live, and it's cool to give it to the people that way."

THURSDAY, NEW YORK CITY, RITZ THEATER: GN'R Clubbin' It '91 reached its culmination, and NYC was electric with anticipation. Since Axl had selected one of his favorite up-and-coming bands to open on the West Coast, Slash got to choose one of his, Raging Slab, for the East. Slab smoked! 'Nuff said.

The Ritz crowd went wild as the Gunners ripped into "Pretty Tied Up." It was a breath-stealing show that saw Rose & Co. blast through the new as well as the old. They didn't just storm the stage, they owned it! The set included "Bad Obsession," "Live and Let Die," "Patience," "Knockin' on Heaven's Door," "Mr. Brownstone," "My Michelle," "Estranged," and another new tune titled "You Could Be Mine," which will be used in the movie *Terminator 2*. Duff successfully stage-dived during "Paradise City," and once again Shannon Hoon joined the band for "Don't Cry." Right before the Gunners' final number of the evening, "Welcome to the Jungle," Axl blew my mind by dedicating it to yours truly, as well as to the 3rd Street Hell's Angels, a half dozen of whom were present. The judges from the balcony gave the NY gig nine and a quarter—pretty damn close to perfection.

It was a helluva week, and this summer is only going to be more intense. Can you say *psychotic*? The Ritz gig and the phenomenal improvement of GN'R live over the course of one week proved what those in the inner circle have known all along: When it's time to get in the ring and swing, Guns N' Roses will always come out victorious! •

DEAR MOM RUSSELL

DEAR MOM RUSSELL: I'm totally obsessed with this singer from a local band. I'm glad to say that we're pretty cool friends and that we seem to enjoy each other's company. The problem is, I want to get more involved with him, but he's about ten years older than I am. My friends are telling me that it can't happen between us, and that he may be more experienced. Could you give me some advice, please? I love him so much. Shouldn't true love be able to fill up the years between us?

—Too Young

Dear Too Young: It is not that he may be more experienced, he is more experienced! Ten years is a big gap, depending on your age. Look at this: Fourteen and 24, 16 and 26, 18 and 28. The first two numbers seem far apart, but the last numbers appear closer together. As we age, we mature. If you give time a chance, it may give you one. A friend, in time, can sometimes become a lover. Stay cool friends for now.

DEAR MOM RUSSELL: I'm a 16-year-old guy whose girlfriend is beaten hard! It's not her father who does it, but her mother. She's starting to say that it might be her fault, but today her mother beat her for nothing—just for not bringing some papers home for her mom to sign. They weren't important! My girlfriend had a black eye and a bruised arm, wrist and leg. It's been going on for a while, and my girlfriend is starting to hit back; so as you can see, it's gone too far. I really started to worry when she started hitting back, because her mom might try to turn her in for hitting her. My girlfriend will only talk to me, and she says she won't turn her mom in. I'm really worried. What should I do about this?

—Really Worried
Greensburg, Kansas

Dear Really Worried: You are right to be worried. Violence breeds violence. You may have to notify the authorities and school officials if things continue as they are. There is a possibility that your girlfriend could do something worse than turning her mother in, if the beatings continue. This should really be stopped before it's too late.

DEAR MOM RUSSELL: I'm a 13-year-old girl who has been seeing this guy for about five months now. I recently found out he's not a virgin (which I am). I didn't think much of it at the time, that is until I learned it wasn't once, but *three* times! This weekend my friend is holding a party,

and I think he's going to try something. I don't mind so much about him trying something, it's just that if I end up losing my virginity to him, I'm afraid he'll just forget about me. I guess all I'm trying to say is that I don't want to end up another notch on his bedpost. What do I do?

—Awestruck in Oxnard

Dear Awestruck: If you don't want to be another notch on the bedpost, stay out of the bed! Think of the party as a baseball game with nothing but scoreless innings. He can't get to first base unless you let him. Many guys feel that once they've scored, the game's over. Make yours a "no hit" game.

DEAR MOM RUSSELL: I am a 14-year-old girl who's tired of being treated like a kid. My sister and her friends are always telling others that I'm just a little girl. I told her to stop, but she doesn't listen. Now, whenever I go somewhere, the guys are never there. They think me and my so-called "little friends" are too young to be hanging around them. I act mature; I don't know what else to do. My mom doesn't even like me hanging around guys that are two years older than me. I'm just a sweet, little, innocent child, and I'm getting sick of it!

—Too Young
Minnesota

Dear T.Y.: What you can do is stay away from your sister's friends, and stay with yours. Hang out with your crowd, not hers. Stay out of her life, and she'll stop the put-downs. She's defending her territory. You might be competition in a year or so, and no sister wants that. Don't get sick of being sweet and innocent. You'll be sicker when you're not!

DEAR MOM RUSSELL: I have a very serious physical problem. See, I'm a 14-year-old female who is very fat. I weigh one hundred pounds over my proper weight. I have stopped eating candy, cake and other junk food. All I eat now is salad and vegetables, but that doesn't help. I've been on a diet for a very long time, but it hasn't helped at all. My parents have helped me try, but that hasn't helped, either. What should I do?

—Fat and Lonely
Jersey City, New Jersey

Dear Fat and Lonely: If the problem is physical, and not medical, you have time on your side. More than diet is required for weight loss. Water intake and exercise are important also. Ask your parents to enroll you in a Weight Watchers teen group. You'll be with others fighting the same battle. It took time to gain, and it will take time to lose. It can be done, because it has been done, by many, many people. Don't give up!

DEAR MOM RUSSELL: I have a big problem with my mom. She is always calling my friends names. She called my one friend a fat a?! and a smelly bit?!, which is not true. She doesn't smell to me. My mom calls my other friend a robber. My friend never stole anything in her life. She calls my other friend a slut, because she wears the styles and is very skinny. What's wrong with that? I told my mom that wasn't nice to say, and I told her my feelings. She still won't listen. Then I tried to make fun of her friends, but she still makes fun of every friend I have. My mom doesn't care about how I feel about her criticizing. Now my friends don't come to my house anymore. What should I do?

—Shaliene

Dear Shaliene: Your mother sounds as though she does not want you to have friends. Chasing your friends away, however, is only chasing you away. The only thing you can do is visit your friends in their homes. It's the only way to keep them from your mother's insults. Don't do to her friends what she does to yours, since you are aware of how unkind it is. Just hope that in time she may change this strange behavior.

Dudes and dudettes, if you've got a problem that's got you stumped, write to Mista Bone's mom. Send your pleas for help to DEAR MOM RUSSELL, 9171 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 300, Beverly Hills, California 90210.

NOTE: The opinions of Ms. Russell do not necessarily represent those of RIP magazine.

BULLETBOYS

Freaks hit the road

BY LAUREL FISHMAN

The guitarist for BulletBoys is on his way to the gym in Indianapolis, wearing short Nike nylon shorts and very little else—just a few silver bangles on his wrist, a Chinese coin and a dog tag around his neck, and a silver hoop earring in one ear. His voluminous curly hair is pulled back simply in a pony tail, but this guy doesn't need much external paraphernalia to make him look his rockin' best. As he passes through the Holiday Inn coffee shop, his manager, Dave Kaplan, teases him. "Hi, Mick Sweda, you beautiful hunk."

"Beautiful hunk of sleep dirt!" Mick amends.

In the midst of a tour supporting their latest album, *Freakshow*, which entails gigging one night, leaving for the next town afterwards, arriving at dawn, getting a few hours of personal time, then doing it all over again—with few complete days off—BulletBoys catch their sleep when and where they can. But they always find time for their daily workouts.

When his is completed, Mick meets up with his bandmates in the elevator a couple of hours later. Also in the elevator is the hotel

Glen LaFerman

lounge manager, who is pregnant. Mick's drummer, Jimmy D'Anda (a/k/a "Fluffy," "Fifi," "Weefee" and "Chiefy"—all originally derived from "Chief Six-Pack"), adjusts a label sticking out of her collar.

"Now, Fluffy, you know you're not supposed to toy with pregnant women," Mick admonishes.

"Are you kidding," the manager shoots back. "That's how I got this way!"

Singer Marq Torien leads the way to the tour bus, and bassist Lonnie Vencent, Jimmy and Mick pile on. Pulling up to the Ritz Music Hall, the guys spot two young lovelies outside the venue, provocatively positioned on their road cases. Lonnie's cohorts rib him. "Are those your girls *again*?"

Jimmy provides the answer: "Nah. But they *will* be!"

A quickie meet 'n' greet with members of their fan club, The Firing Squad, brings a nine-month-old baby onto the bus with the entourage. Looking like a candidate for office, Marq holds the infant, posing for pictures as the little one yanks hard on Marq's hair. Politically correct, Marq keeps right on smilin'.

He and Lonnie adjourn to a cafe next door for a bite. Swimming into the sea of conventional Midwestern types, a metalhead enters the restaurant. He is wearing a T-shirt that reads, "Ozzy Osbourne is...." followed by a checklist of options like "My Granny's Favorite Singer," "The Demon King," "A Swell Guy Who Likes Pets," "A Heavy Metal Madman," "Imperator Of The Dark Regions" or "All Of The Above." Spontaneously, Lonnie and Marq raise their fists in the air. "All of the above," they call out.

Gig time, and Marq takes the stage for "Hard As a Rock," hopping in on one foot, holding a mic stand swathed in feathers perpendicular to his body. It's a hot night—and an even hotter venue—so it's shorts for most of the band, with the exception of Fifi...er, *Jimmy*, who is sporting a plaid mini-*kilt*. Mick somehow seems to be wearing even less than his workout outfit. His guitar shields a skimpy pair of shorts, making it look as if he's naked!

At the end of "Hell On My Heels," Marq takes a flying leap off the drum riser, and as the band kicks into "For the Love of Money," he tugs on his shorts suggestively. Soon he removes his fingerless gloves with his teeth, saying, "How many of you women are feeling sex-u-al tonight?" The women shriek in response. "How many of you *men* are feeling sex-u-al tonight?" Marq calls out. Predictably, the men make even more noise.

"THC Groove" goes over big with the fans, and Marq's got his moves down. Atop the drum riser, he slips down his shorts to reveal one fine posterior. On "Shoot the Preacher Down," Marq, Lonnie and Mick are jumping like maniacs. Female screeches punctuate every break in "Smooth Up in Ya," as Marq rotates his hips like a seasoned striptease artist. The show ends with the band shooting a big, bad moon.

On the bus after the gig, Fluffy...uh...*Jimmy* lounges in a towel. Wiggling his finger through the split at crotch level, he says to Mick, "Jim Morrison just went like *this*, but you *did it*!" It gets explained how, during the set, Mick's guitar cord got caught, he tripped, his guitar went out, and he fell to the floor. Then, before making a quick switch to his backup Les Paul, he dropped his pants for a split second!

Road manager Mike Selvick sticks his head in the door to announce, "Remember the girl in the hotel in Louisville? She's out there. Remember when the police came and broke the door?" More explanations are in order. It seems that Mick and Lonnie got thrown in jail after a TV got trashed in a hotel room, and they were the ones caught naked in bed "with blood on their hands"—from the broken TV, of course! A deejay friend, Ace Cosby, pops in to give "THC Groove" the official Ace endorsement:

"It's a hip sex song!"

Responds Mick, "I've always had that hormone imbalance."

Next stop: the Coronado Theater in Rockford, Illinois, where Marq makes his way back to the bus for a workout after getting settled in the dressing room. "I always strip onstage for the girls, so I have to keep my body lookin' good," he says. "I love taking off my clothes onstage. I'm in my own little world, and I get really turned on when I'm up there. Guys may think it's stupid, or not understand, but I love it!"

One of the techs comes on the bus, and it's time for the daily bowel movement report. His ain't good. Mick's parting advice is, "Just don't force it, Bob. You'll pop a hernia!"

Chiefy (that's *Jimmy*) is left sitting alone in the front of the bus in the semidarkness, shadows playing across his face. "Chiefy" seems to be the name that best fits this moment, for Jimmy's American Indian heritage comes to life in the passion on his face and his trancelike vibe. Listening intently to Van Halen's *1984*, he warms up on air guitar, then with invisible drumsticks. As the adrenaline gets going, he comes spiritedly alive, the Indian blood pounding in his veins. You can imagine him in a tribal ceremony with his forefathers, in a rhythmic frenzy as the designated drummer of a primitive yet transcendental ritual.

Just before the audience is due in, the band enters the house for a fast photo-shoot in the ornate old theater, originally built in 1927 for vaudeville and silent pictures. The elaborate decor depicts oriental pagodas, dragons and half-naked goddesses with geometric sconces, lavish scrollwork and rococo curlicues—all in gilt and worked into the walls. The crowd begins to take their seats, and in seconds a group of females spots the band. "Oooo, Marq!" they scream. It takes a dozen security men to subdue as many girls. The band is hustled backstage, where Cheap Trick's Rick Nielsen and Bun E. Carlos, both Rockford residents, are there to catch the show. Bullet-Boys decide to honor them with a surprise.

"House lights!" shouts the stage manager. The lights dim. There is a general ruckus from the audience as they scramble to their seats and whoop for the band. In front of their 20-foot high, 40-foot wide backdrop of a pig, Bulletboys kick off the set with "Hello There," a Cheap Trick classic from the late-'70s. Lonnie skips from one side of the stage to the other, as Marq bounces around, bumpin' and grindin'. Behind his splashy 3-D, metal-flaked and pearlized custom Black Diamond-finish Drum Workshop kit, Jimmy is playing barefoot. On "Hard As a Rock" all three frontmen are jumping in unison, and Marq gets into the hip thrusts big time for "Hell On My Heels." Before "For the Love of Money" Lonnie trades his shirt for another bass. Tonight he's the one showing serious skin as he gets down and funky. Marq gets into his strip-tease shtick, and Mick peels down to his shorts at the side of

the stage and jams on a down-home front-porch folk blues intro to "Talk to Your Daughter." Marq tosses his befeathered mic stand into the air like a javelin as these white boys wail the blues. Once again the down-and-dirty "THC Groove," with its insinuating bass line, is a hit with the crowd. After Mick gets flashy on the frets on "Huge," Marq works the room: "I know I'm playing in the home of Cheap Trick tonight. And Rick Nielsen's in the back, and he said you can scream *a whole lot louder* than that!" He continues to rouse 'em by singing, "BulletBoys love you," and on "Shoot the Preacher Down" he is undulating like a snake. His voice and Mick's guitar "talk" back and forth. By the end of the show Lonnie and Mick are abusing their instruments, hanging over the orchestra pit. The concertgoers dig on "Smooth Up in Ya," which closes the set, and the house lights come up.

Rick Nielsen stops by the bus to visit the band. Jiving them about their rendition of "Hello There," Rick says, "I always knew that song was bad. You guys just proved it!" But he is obviously pleased with the performance.

"Thanks for comin' down," the band tells him.

"Thanks for lettin' me in for free," Rick responds. "I could afford the bus fare," he laughs, "it was just gettin' in."

All in all, things are pretty sedate on the bus, where the nightly highlight is enjoying the latest shipment of Mick's mom's superlative chocolate chip cookies. "The biggest story is, everyone's sober," Mick states. "Except for Jimmy. He's excluded, 'cuz he breaks things for a living! We're holding out to see who'll give in first, me or Lonnie—although I drank a little champagne when my parents came out to Cleveland."

Marty Temme

Jimmy says, "The smartest thing we did was to stop drinking like pigs. The first tour we had a coupla cases of beer every night, and it was always gone. Six months into the tour, people were sick, tired. Now we're sleeping more. We never slept last tour!"

"We'd pass out, then come to!" Mick clarifies. "We realized when you go through that for 14 months, come home, and you're used to having a beer three feet away, what do you do? Before we became messes, we settled down."

The biggest benefit is that Bulletboys are getting along great. "Before," Mick admits, "we'd just get lit, yell and scream. Now there are no problems. If something comes up, we just discuss it."

Jimmy says they used to be like drinking buddies, and now they're like brothers; friends who "can discuss stuff and actually remember it the next day!"

Mick points out that it wasn't as if the first tour was a total drunken waste. "Don't get me wrong," he says. "We had some brilliant shows and great times. It's a matter of finding a balance."

Jimmy agrees. "I think all bands go through that on their first tour. Either you wake up and smell the coffee, or you go over the edge."

Some of what BulletBoys have learned is on the *Freakshow* album. "We realized that, after making the first album, there were a lot of things in the industry that have nothing to do with making music," Mick says. "Most of it has to do with *selling* music. Those are two completely different things. That's why 'THC Groove' has such a tongue-in-cheek attitude. We don't resent the business; we deal with it."

But occasional messages in their material aside, Marq stresses that what BulletBoys are is "a good-time party band you can hang out with."

Lonnie says that when listening to their music, people can get away from it all, "and not bite their fingernails or twist their hair, but put on headphones and block out everything, and for that time, forget their rent problems and car payments."

"While your folks are screaming," adds Marq, "you shut that door and turn on your stereo. You'll still come back, but you got a break for awhile," as BulletBoys "take you to a little place called the *Freakshow*." •

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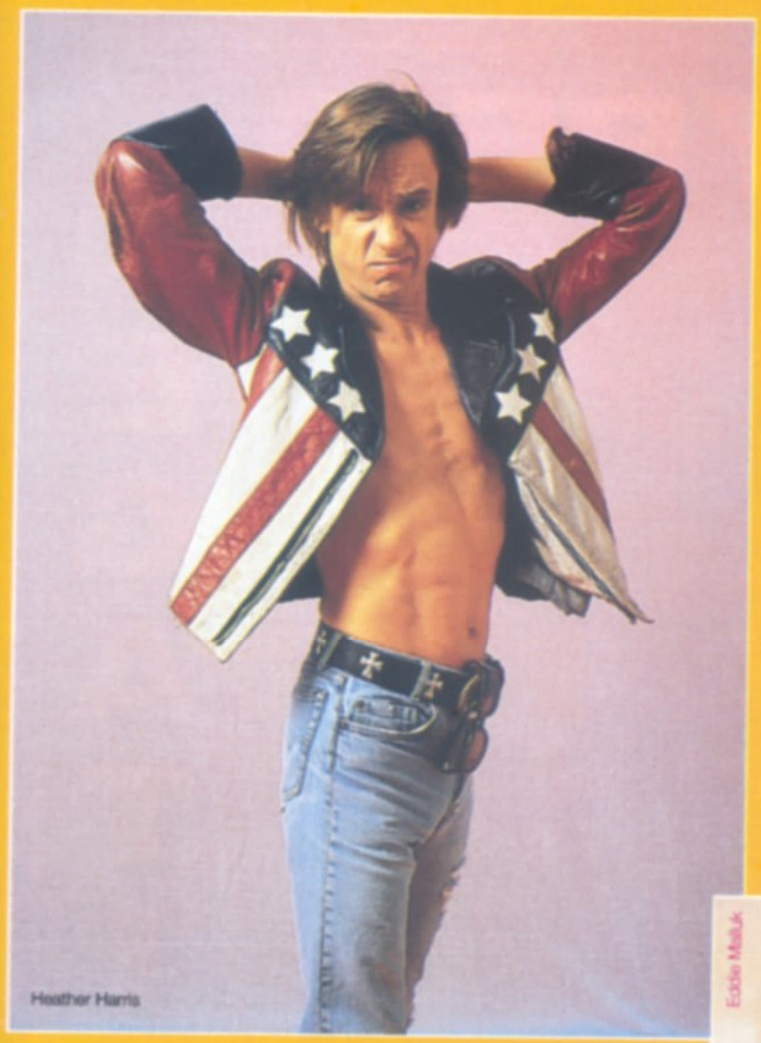

Heather Harris

"If you want to say something valid or express your own personality in a real way, from the gut, you're either going to do it through comedy, ← or it's going to be taken that way. Just like my first band was. Everybody thought we were a joke." (**Iggy Pop** commenting on the Spinal Tap elements of rock and roll.)

"I have deja vu's like they're going out of style. I can't control them, which is weird, I think." (Ratt's **Stephen Pearcy** talking about his supernatural experiences.)

Eddie Malluk

"Kids came to see us play, not *press* 'play.' " (Warrant's **Jani Lane** on another band who choose to sample their live sounds now and then.) →

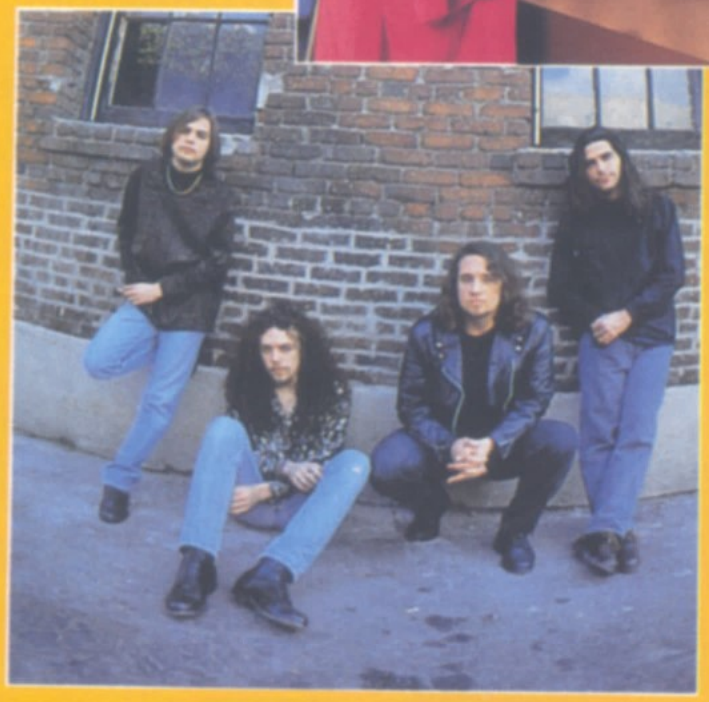
"I don't like Vanilla Ice. He says he's from the street, but I don't believe him. What street...Sesame Street?" (Rapper **Ice-T** dissing that other, unrelated Ice guy in a *Los Angeles Times* interview.)

"We physically fight. Sometimes in front of our manager. We had a couple big fights in front of our Geffen reps, and they were like, 'What the hell's going on?' It's not as bad, I understand, as a Ray Davies, or an Angus and Malcolm [Young] fight." (Black Crowes guitarist **Rich Robinson** on the, er, creative process he and brother Chris engage in.)

"Next question." (Throbs guitarist **Roger Ericson** practicing his patented rock-star responses.)

"Slash's mom told us to sign with Geffen, so that's what we → did."(I Love You singer **Christopher Palmer** joking about why his band decided to ink a deal with Mr. Geffen's label.)

"I'm a good liar. Ask any of my old girlfriends. Well, I'm not really a liar. I can't stand lying. I can't stand liars." (Faster Pussycat's **Taime Downe**, who apparently tells the whole truth and nothing but the truth...except when he's lying. Honest.)



"I guess it's a strange name for a rock 'n' roll band, but then again, Alice Cooper was too. We wouldn't be able to use any of Walt Disney's artwork, not that we were really interested anyway, so it wasn't a problem." (**Tom Keifer** of the band 101 Dalmations, uh, I mean Cinderella, talking about their moniker.)

"Sushi, Jon Bon Jovi posters, large farm animals." (The list of backstage demands for that wacky Seattle lineup **Tad**. What else?)

"If we sprouted wings and flew off to Jamaica, no one would be surprised." (**Slash** commenting on Guns N' Roses' penchant for doing the unexpected.)

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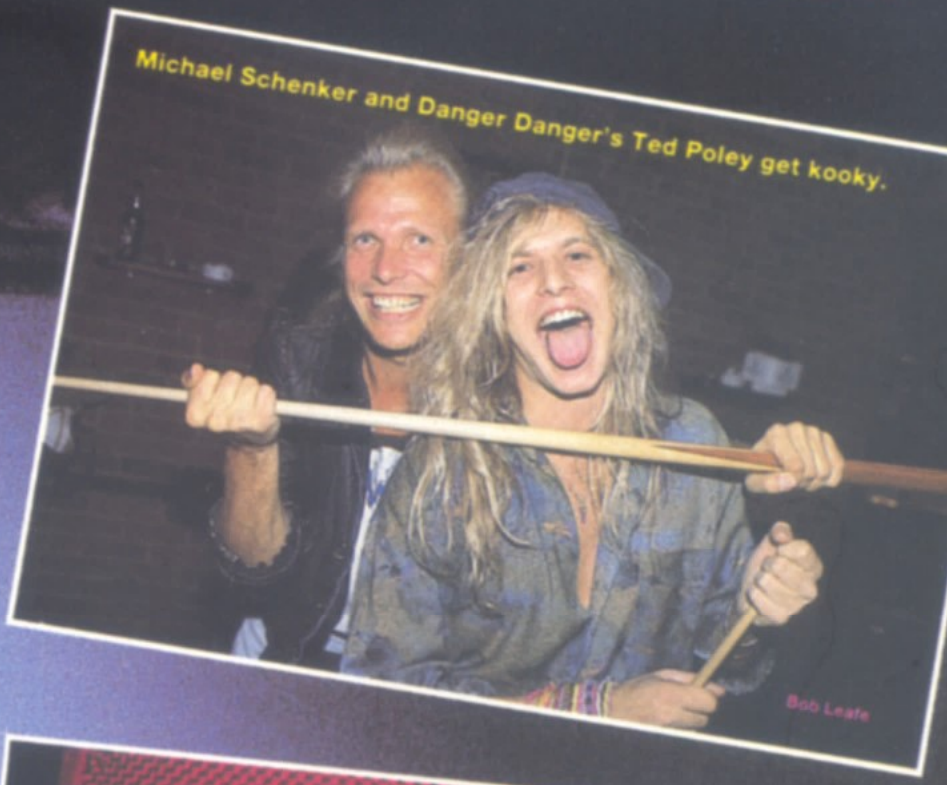

Michael Schenker and Danger Danger's Ted Poley get kooky.

Bob Leafe

Peter Cronin Photofeatures

Cycle Sluts From Hell: "Mom, I want ya to meet my girlfriend...."

MADDEN NFL 94

AUGUST
12

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ROCK VAULT

edited by S.L. Duff

You know, it ain't easy bein' the cryptkeeper. Sometimes just keepin' track of all this information gives me a headache the size of a tour bus. I've tried pain relievers, but it seems the only thing that relieves the pressure in my aging cranium is to just release as much of this trivial knowledge as I can at one time. So have a go, and don't worry if you can't solve them all—there's no need to overdose on aspirin; the answers are on page 102.

1. There's nothing unusual about covering another artist's song, but this New York-based band covered the Rolling Stones' *Exile on Main Street* double-album in its entirety, track-for-track. Name them.

2. These Yugoslavian industrialists performed a similar stunt by covering the Beatles' *Let It Be* LP in its entirety. Name them. BONUS: This same band also released an EP containing six separate versions of the same Rolling Stones song. Which song?

3. Guitarist Jason Broadrick has previously played with Napalm Death and Head Of David. What band is he currently with? BONUS: What label do they record for?

4. French band Treponem Pal derived their name from what?

5. Drummer London May played with what late-'80s band?

6. This Bay Area metal band separate themselves from the pack by the inclusion of Aaron (Pause) Vaughn, who plays keyboards and scratches—rap style—on the turntables, live and on record. Name the band. BONUS: Name the album on which Aaron joined the band.

7. Never one to be predictable, in 1975 Lou Reed followed some of the most successful albums of his career (*Rock 'n' Roll Animal* and *Live*) with a two-record set of sheer noise—mostly manipulated amplifier hum, tape hiss, and virtually no musical instruments. His fans were stunned, the critics shocked, and RCA Records not amused. What is the title of Lou's musical oddity?

8. Mother Love Bone's Stone Gossard and Jeff Ament and Mudhoney's Mark Arm, previous to the formation of those groups, played together in what band?

9. Single B-sides often don't make it to LPs. "51st Anniversary" and "The Stars That Play With Laughing Sam's Dice" were B-sides for which famous artist? BONUS: What did the title of "The Stars That Play...." allegedly refer to?

10. Grindcore meisters Napalm Death like to keep their songs short. How many songs are on their (single) LP *Scum*?

11. In 1973 John Hinch drummed for what famous band?

12. In 1977 Doug Sampson drummed for what famous band? BONUS: Who replaced Sampson, and went on to record the band's debut LP?

Neil Zlozower

OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BAS

BY JUDY WIEDER

Sebastian Bach is wild. So what's new? For Skid Row's tall, elegant, blond frontman, shrieking your heart out for the sheer joy or rage of it is just one of those things you do. "It's you! It's you!" he screams at me from Atlantic's offices in New York City, where his band has just delivered the amazing *Slave to the Grind*, their second blockbuster album. [See RIP's five-dagger review in *Ear Candy*.] "All those naughty road stories I did with you on our first tour!" he wails, recalling such stomach-turners as "the time I was so drunk, I climbed that tree in a swanky hotel, ate all its leaves, then vomited on myself and my tour manager."

Yes, without question, since he exploded into the rock world in the fall of 1987, when McGhee Management grabbed him out of the Toronto club scene and stuck him in front of Dave "The Snake" Sabo (guitar), Rachel Bolan (bass), Rob Affuso (drums) and Scotti Hill (guitar), Sebastian Bach has sometimes chowed a bit too heavily at the smorgasbord of rock excesses. His white-hot vocals, combustible temper, stripped-nerve intensity, questionable judgement, endearing boyishness and breathtakingly good looks quickly catapulted him to the outer limits of rock stardom.

"This time I've got to cool it a little," he says, contemplating some kind of shortcut to adulthood. "But that won't be easy. With this Guns N' Roses tour, it's going to be very hard to behave myself! Axl Rose is calling it our 'Get Into The Ring' tour, and I think that's a very cool description of our two bands on the road together. But I don't want attention just for doing, um, bad shit. You know? It's kinda weird, but before I got into all that trouble last year, I was winning Best Singer in every magazine. It's so outrageous. I don't want to distract from the music, because I think we've got an awesome album. I wrote three-quarters of the stuff with Rachel and Snake this time. It's very, very cool. We just took the elements of, say, a 'Sweet Little Sister' or a 'Big Guns,' and took it to a hundred times the intensity that it was on the first record. It's like the same kind of emotions and feelings, but more intensified. It's like the first album, only like we ate a whole bunch of speed before we made it."

And *did* they eat speed to whip the notes of songs like "Livin' on a Chain Gang," "Riot Act," "Get the F?!k Out" and "Monkey Business" into the awesome weapons of mass destruction they've become? Bas winces.

"Naw, no...it just sounds like we did. Listen, we even have a ballad about heroin abuse on this album, called 'Wasted Time.' In fact, we have three ballads on this album. We also have 'In a Darkened Room' and a song about trying not to lose faith in God with all the shit that goes on in the world. That's a tough thing to do. It's called 'Quicksand Jesus.' "

Recording *Slave to the Grind* in both Los Angeles and Florida, Bas reports that the band locked themselves away, shunning most of their well-known half-corked lost weekends. "We wanted to come back with an album that would continue to show how hard we can rock, and how great we are at it," the lean machine insists. "I know my reputation last year sort of colored things all one way. What have you heard about me?" he digresses with some concern in his voice.

What have I heard people say about Sebastian Bach? I riffle through my memory banks, censoring frantically. Despite his youthful inability to keep his lid on when it comes to expressing himself, I have noticed in past meetings how easily Bas is hurt by chips flying off other people's shoulders.

"I know that people who don't really know you are a little afraid of you. When you walk into a room, you can see some people worrying. 'Uh oh! I've heard about him. He might do something wild—and I'll get hurt!' "

Bas smiles. "Yeah, okay. I like that. You're right. People are afraid of me when I walk into a room. I can feel it. They have all these preconceived notions about me. Now that you've said it, I realize it's true. But you know what? I really kind of enjoy that. I'd much rather have them think that when I walk into a room, than have them say, 'Oh, look, here comes little f?!king nobody.' " [Doubtful. Looming at least two heads above all those gawking at him, Sebastian will never be mistaken for a "little f?!king nobody."]

After the furious success of their first album and tour and the succeeding months crammed in the studio together, I wonder how Skid Row is getting along these days.

"We fight like cats and dogs!" Bas says. "I cannot tell a lie. I'm not going to tell you that we don't fight—we do. It's just part of rock 'n' roll, you know? And it's the tension that makes the music sound so good. I read this interview with David Lee Roth a long, long time ago. He said that the process of making a record was really just seeing who could argue the loudest. Whoever could, would get his idea on tape. Making a record *is* a lot of arguing, but it's all done with one objective in mind: making the best record possible. We all have the same end goal. But I'm not going to sit here and lie to you. We f?!king fight all the time."

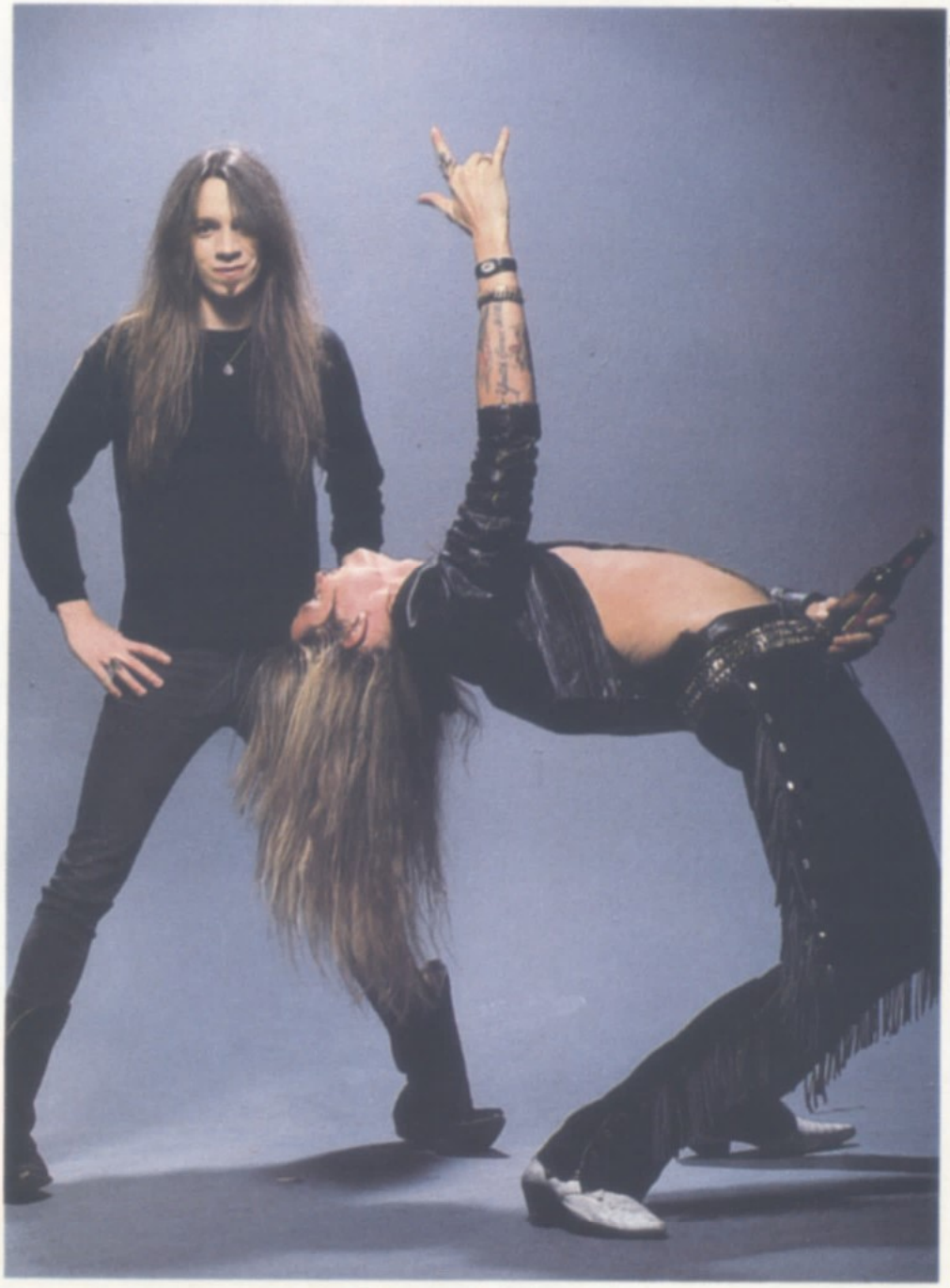
On their first album most, if not all, of the songs were written by Rachel and Snake. In addition, a portion of the publishing went to people outside the band. A publishing company called New Jersey Underground Music ASCAP, which Rachel once told me included Jon Bon Jovi in its ownership, collected the Skids' publishing money. This time that isn't going to happen.

"You know what we did?" Bas says, confiding. "This time we just split up all the money between us. Last year we had so much trouble with the music industry and stuff like that, as far as who got what out of our band. This time we made sure that it was all *us*! And we divided the songs up equally. It eliminates all the fighting about 'I want my song on the record, so that I can have a house!' Because, you know, that can become very real. So we said, 'F?!k that! Let's just split the money up all equal, and then it doesn't matter whose song gets on the record.' Then you're really just trying to pick the best song."

Other major things have changed for Bas since Skid Row first hit the limelight. Even though he was barely out of his teens when the band began climbing the charts, Bas had already fathered a son, Paris, by a woman named Maria, with whom he was rumored to live. None of this has changed. What *is* different is that rock's seductive heartthrob is now refusing to hide anything.

"I've decided that people have a right to know everything," he says. "I have a son who is now three years old, whom I love very much. I'm not married. I'm too young to be married. I just turned 23. I was born on April 3, 1968, and my son, Paris, was born on April 4, 1988. It's 20 years, almost to the day. It was unplanned. See, I had been the typical rock guy, f?!king every single girl I could get my hands on. And then I met this girl, Maria, who I really got along with good. She's like one of the only girls I can talk to, or who really wants to talk. Do you know what I'm saying? I'm not married to her, but I do love her, and maybe someday I will get married to her. But when I do, I want it to be totally f?!king solid and everything perfect.

"But if some kid is having a child, and if he could look at me and see the stuff that I do, and see what my life is like, maybe he'll say to himself, 'If he can do it, I can do it too,' " Bas continues. "It's hard, and it hurts that I can't see him as much as I'd like, but I definitely have a commitment to him. I wouldn't bring him into this world if I didn't have a commitment to him. I believe you have to have some sort of responsibility for your actions.



Neil Zlozower

d there's a lot of joy for me too. When he mes in singing, 'We are the youth gone d!' it freaks me out.

And another thing," he says, on a roll now. I do get married or something, I'm not ng to do it behind everybody's back. I n't attempt to live a lie. I'm not interested ving a lie. Last year I was told by certain ple that if I said I had a son, I would be the Mr. Rogers of rock. I can guarantee , when you listen to this record, and en you see us up there playing a gig with ns N' Roses, it certainly will not be Mr. gers up there that you see! I know that girls like to think of rock stars as avail-e, and I am. I'm not married. That's part hy. I think to myself, what if this or that pens? I'm leaving my options open. But does not mean that I don't love my son 150% of my heart."

he son of hippies, Bas still remembers en his folks packed up their kids and ssed the country to Toronto, Canada, in reen VW van with a peace symbol on the k. He also remembers the day he told parents that their 1968, Summer of Love d wanted to be a rock star. All hell broke e....

said, 'Dad, I want to be a rock star,' and said, 'Get out of my house.' I had some d times back then with my parents."

s was shocked that people like his par-, who were so into the '60s—they named sister (a successful model) Heather "Dy-" and called his dog "Lennon"—were so ked out over his desire to sing in a rock d. "Maybe they were just looking out for " he admits, "because I was always kind ild. Today, they couldn't be happier. My came to our Forum show last year, and came the night Little Richard jammed us and everything. Well, for him to see and Little Richard together, it just blew mind, because Little Richard was his fa-e. He was in seventh heaven. My mom e down to see us all the time. She loves She loves the Skids."

er being tossed out of the house, Se-ian joined a band in Toronto. He was 16 s old, and already six foot two. "Because y height, I could get into all these bars stuff. I played around for a year or two here, and then I got into an American d in Detroit. I was in a band called Madam r a while. I met the photographer Mark s when I was 17, and went to his wed-. There were some people there that v Skid Row. There were also some peo-rom Bon Jovi's management, McGhee rtainment, and they were looking for a r for Skid Row. They had auditioned a e bunch of people. They were looking kid who could sing a song called 'Youth e Wild.' They needed someone who ed young, because a song like that d sound pretty silly with a guy 35 up singing it, wouldn't it? I had already experience, so when we all met, it was we already knew each other a long, long I knew right away when they sent me tape that this was the band I'd dreamed ing in ever since I was a kid of eleven, ing to Ted Nugent records. I officially me a member of Skid Row in October 87. I'm really glad to be a part of the writing now, because when I first joined the band, the songs were all there. I wasn't one of those cliche lead singers who comes in and says, 'Hey, let's change everything,' just to get my name on it. When they sent me the tape, the songs were great. That's why I joined the band—because the songs were so good. If it ain't broke, don't break it. Just leave it the way it is, man."

Bas is definitely a song man. In fact, he is so enthusiastic about his band's tunes, he can barely understand why a rock fan could actually care about anything else. "When you were asking me questions about being single or available so that the fans don't lose interest in Skid Row, it seemed so weird to me. I know what you're saying, of course, but I honestly feel that if a fan loses interest in a rock star because he gets married or has a kid, then they were never really relating to the band in the first place. I know that relating to the myth is a large part of rock 'n' roll, but I'm telling you, my records aren't going to sound any different and I ain't going to sing any worse because I've got a kid. Hell, I had a kid when I made the first Skid Row record!"

The day of our interview, Bas had just learned that Skid Row's lead track, "Monkey Business," had been selected as the theme song for the new Arnold Schwarzenegger film, *Terminator II*.

"I just can't believe it!" he bellows from the heart. "It's so weird, because when you're so close to everything, the way I am at this point,

(continued on page 100)

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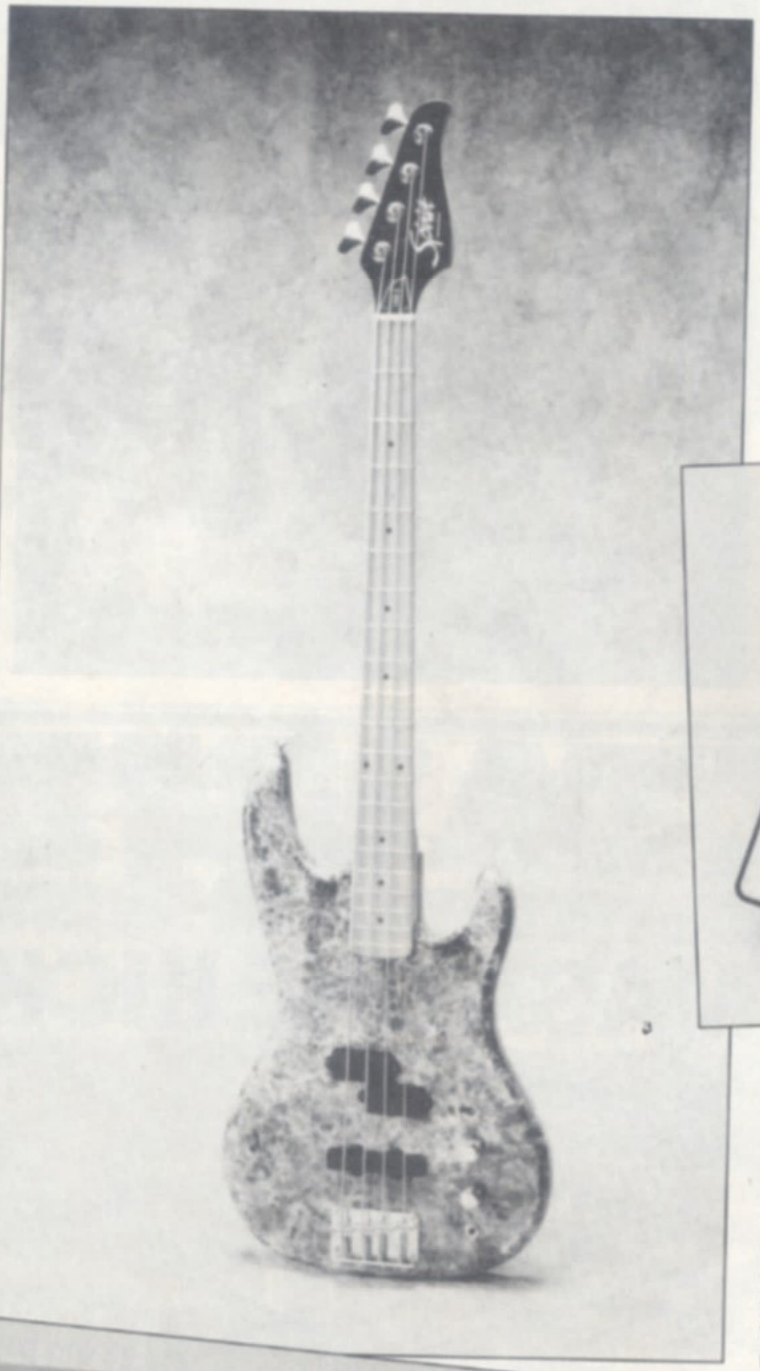

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Oscar Schmidt recently introduced a new bass to their Spirit line of quality, affordable instruments. This fine axe features a maple neck and fingerboard with die-cast tuners, a three-way pickup switch that controls the Precision and Jazz bass-styled pickups, and it comes in four very cool finishes. So if you're itchin' to rest your weary bones, save a few bucks and start blastin' out that righteous bottom end, write to Oscar Schmidt International, 230 Lexington Dr., Buffalo Grove, IL 60089, and find out where you can get a new Spirit P/J bass.

METALHEAD ELECTRONICS

Elan Wha-Wha-One

Foot-pedal effects have long been accused of signal vampirism, gremlin noise augmentation and cord spaghettiism. All too true. But sometimes ya just gotta have the little buggers right there under your plate o' meat for proper operation. Take the venerable wha-wha. The whole idea is to rock back and forth thusly upon its treadlelike platform to change your instrument's tone. Until now, this meant your signal had to jet back and forth from guitar to amp to effects loop to amp, creating noise, cord hassles and loss of signal in the process.

Elan's Wha-Wha-One is a revolutionary gizmo. Rack-mounted, it uses any volume pedal as a control, and can be used as a stereo volume pedal as well. The unit provides color and sensitivity controls, so you can dial it in just right. Your signal never visits the floor with the Wha-Wha-One!

To find out more, write to Metalhead Electronics at 5707 Cahuenga Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601.

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Have you grown tired of all the sounds that your GR-50 guitar synth produces? Stop pouting! Roland has just announced the new PN-GR50-01 sound card. It provides 64 new tones, 64 new timbres, 64 new patches, five new patch chains and an additional rhythm setup. Great googly moogly! There're a poop-load of new noises to be made, including acoustic piano, analog bass, percussive pads and probably even one that sounds a little like

a chicken walking over hot coals while wearing a tiny mumu.

Patches include splits, layers and single tones that take advantage of the GR-50's velocity switching, panning, individual string transposition, multi-timbral capability and reverb/delay patch parameters. In fact, there are so many new things you can do, you'll probably just give up and use the sound card as a coaster for your espresso cup. Just kiddin'! These are fabulous and, at only $79.95, a raging bargain! Contact RolandCorp US, 7200 Dominion Cr., Los Angeles, CA 90040-3647 for more info.

JACKSON

Stealth Guitar

Did you realize that Jackson Guitars is under contract to the Pentagon? It's true. Built to exacting U.S. military specs, Jackson has just unveiled the musical counterpart to the B2 Stealth Bomber—the new Stealth guitar!

Through tons of gently fluttering confetti, the new Stealth has winged its way to the forefront of electric-guitar technology. Starting at the now-famous Jackson headstock, we find a quarter-sawn maple neck topped with an ebony fingerboard for excellent stability and playability. The dot markers are off-center—a very cool, Gretch-inspired touch. For your playing enjoyment, the basswood body is low profile and amazingly light, while still providing a lively tone. For sonic pleasure, Jackson top-loads two singles and a humbucker in front of the recessed wiggle stick.

If Stormin' Norman Schwarzkopf could play, don't ya think he'd want a Stealth? Check 'em out! Or write to Charvel/Jackson at 1316 E. Lancaster Ave., Ft. Worth, TX 76112.

RIVERA

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Some guitarists just aren't satisfied with one great sound—they need an amplifier that allows them to diddle and twist a formidable number of knobs to dial in many cool tones. These multi-timbral maniacs, or M.T.M.'s for short, require the most crystalline, clean sounds, the most buzzsaw-esque dirty tones and, while they're at it, everything in between. That's one tall order for an amp manufacturer to fill.

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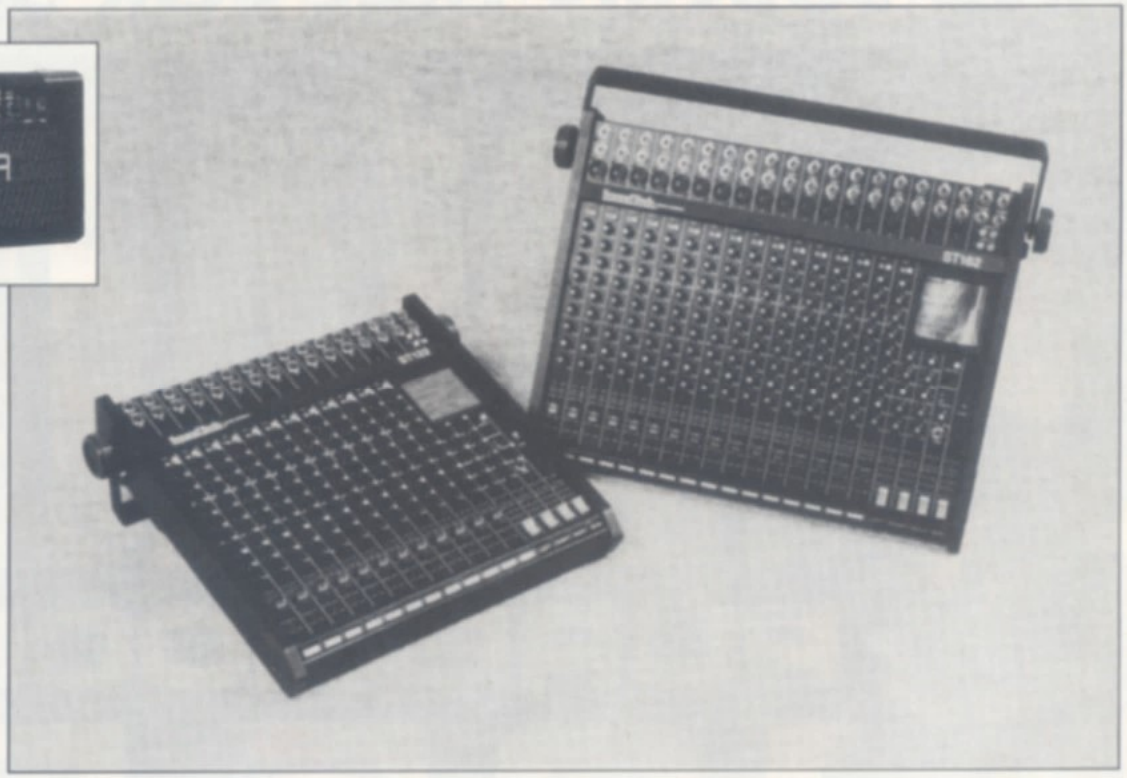
These are 12 or 16x2x1 consoles with tons of unique features. Each channel has three bands of EQ, plus midsweep and three AUX busses, one pre and two post. The master section has two effects-return controls, and can also send effects to the monitor buss, so you can treat yourself to wet-monitor mixes. Also nifty in an urban, too-hip way is the LCD metering system. Both units have carrying handles that double as angled stands for tabletop use. Specs for these units are tops, making them perfect for live or recording situations.

If you'd like to know more about these or other SoundTech products, drop them a note at 2300 Lexington Dr., Buffalo Grove, IL 60089.



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"I hated what I was doing. I hated it. From day one. It just sucked." Strange words indeed when you consider that they're coming from a working musician. Especially when the rocker in question is referring to a band that put his face on MTV and bucks in his bank account.

"The only thing I can say about what I've done in the past and why I left is...the Blackeyed Susan album speaks for itself," states Dean Davidson. Yep, he's renounced the moniker "Dizzy" along with his former band, the lace-clad, grandiose, high-pitched-vocal lineup known as Britny Fox.

Now we get a chance to observe Davidson in his natural habitat, in a quintet known as Blackeyed Susan, a blues-based, multi-textural rock 'n' roll band featuring lead guitarists Rick Criniti and Tony Santoro, bassist Erik Levy and drummer Chris Branco. "There's a '70s vibe to the band, because that's what we grew up around—Nazareth, Sweet, T. Rex...the Stones are my favorite band," explains Davidson. "The ballad is like a gospel thing, while 'Ride With Me' is a more Western/Southern feel. We're doing '19th Nervous Breakdown' live, and we also do a Chambers Brothers tune."

The methodical-minded lead singer returns again to the vast differences between Britny Fox and his new and much-improved band. "What I've done before...there weren't a lot of fans, and people didn't know what else I could do. I wanted to play for the song, not the image," stresses Davidson. "This is not a prefabricated thing. There's no gimmick. What you hear on the album is what you get live."

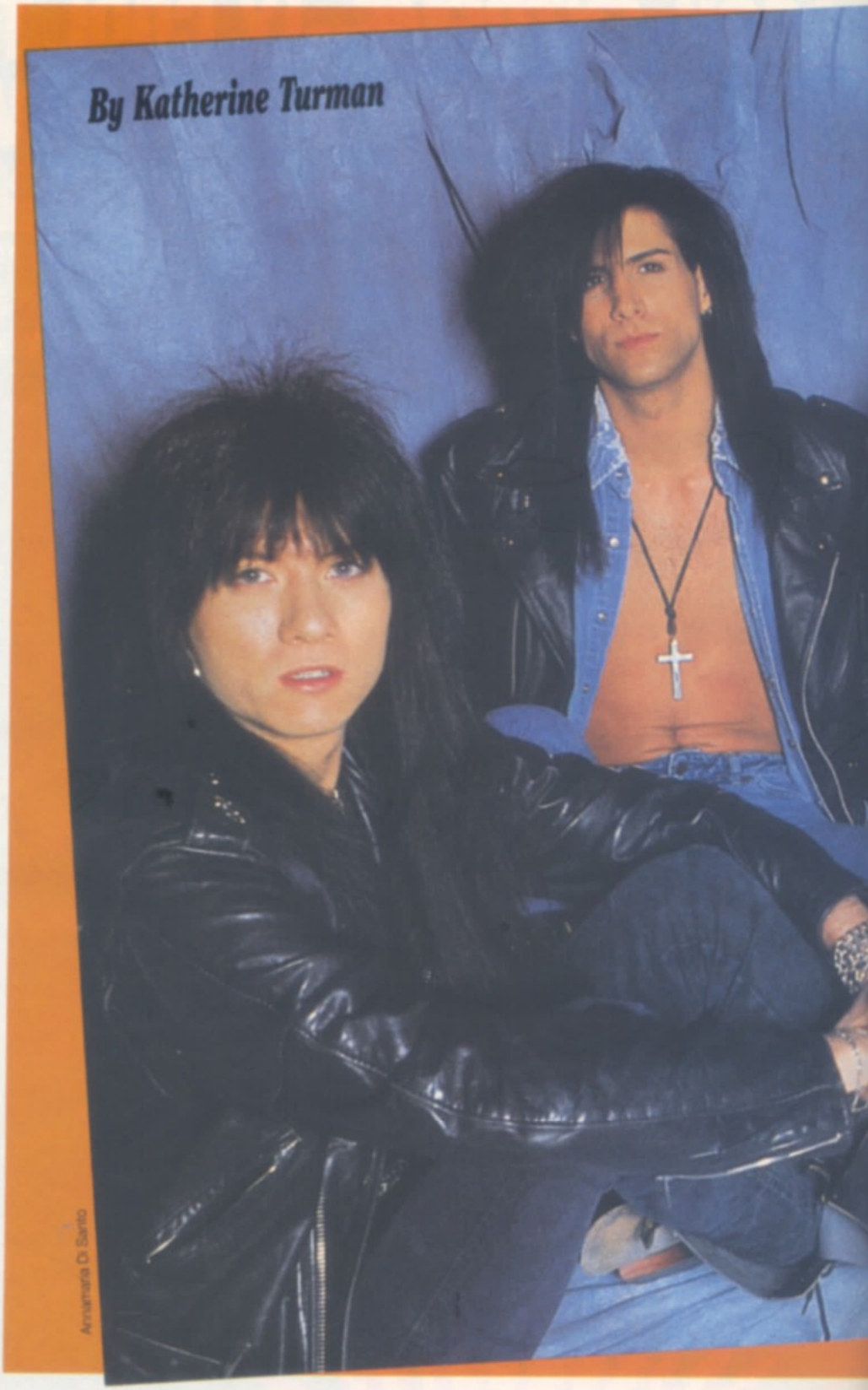
There's no wardrobe person and no hair dye. No screaming from the throat and no samples. "It only takes one person to trip over the cord," Davidson says, chuckling about taped backups in general. "Now it's more from my heart," he continues. "And it's my voice; no more of the screaming. I played it for my mom, and she didn't know it was me! Now I'm happier as a person; I get along with everybody. I'm not bummed out. I proved it; for once in my life, I got a deal on my own, with my songs."

As for the Britny Fox guys, who Davidson left only a little over a year ago: "They can do what they want, and God bless 'em." He does, however, know they've heard Blackeyed Susan. How? Davidson smiles somewhat smugly. "I know. I hear things."

According to Davidson, Blackeyed Susan didn't get their Mercury deal on the strength of his name. Actually, he felt the fact that he played with Britny would most likely be detrimental. Still, he's diplomatic about his two-year stint with his former lineup. "Things are meant for a reason in life. And if you don't learn by your mistakes or get screwed, you don't know. It was a stepping stone."

Blackeyed Susan, however, is the be-all and end-all for Davidson, who assured his bandmembers they'd have a deal before Christmas of '90. "For seven days a week we rehearsed. I've known them all for a while. Rick played keyboards for Cinderella since day one. Tony, my lead guitarist, he was the lead singer for the Missiles in Philly; they had albums out and stuff. The drummer, I knew him for about a year and a half, and Erik I've known for ten or 12 years."

By Katherine Turman



Annamaria Di Santo

On the strength of his songs, which he'd been writing and keeping on the "back burner" since his teen years, Davidson got spec studio time for the band in Philly's Studio Four. And the buzz began. Geffen A&R kingpin John Kalodner flew to Pennsylvania to see Blackeyed Susan in rehearsal and wanted to sign them. Davidson, however, felt a more comfortable vibe with Mercury Records. Then, "As we were finishing the album, eight other labels were calling my house. I thought, 'This is cool,' " recalls Davidson. "I nailed the deal two days before Christmas eve," keeping his promise to the band.

Their debut, *Electric Rattlebone*, was produced by Philly buddy Randy Cantor, who is also a Geffen staff writer. In keeping with Davidson's back-to-basics approach, *Electric Rattlebone* pretty much consists of the original Blackeyed Susan demos.

When the band was ready to sign their record deal, Davidson recalls, no one at the label had even seen the members of Blackeyed Susan. "I could have brought five midgets into the company, going, 'Here's the band.' I even said that to them, 'Did you ever think that I could have had five guys about a foot high, with size 12 shoes?' They were like, 'Yeah, we didn't think of that, but the songs were so good, we're behind you.' "

FOX ON THE RUN

BLACKEYED SUSAN

That confidence runs rampant in the band as well—fortunately, because at press time, Blackeyed Susan had never played a live show, and Davidson had never performed as a lead singer without a guitar. But the former drummer wasn't worried in the slightest. "I've got it down. I'll just go out and wing it, and we'll pull it off. I'm really into dancing, and I play harmonica. We're going to have, like, eight people onstage. We have two female singers who do percussion and stuff, and a touring keyboard player, Dave Barlow."

Still, without *any* shows under their collective belt.... "There was a rumor going around, like, 'Dean's a lunatic,' " he says, smiling. "Well, I ain't. Look at everybody else. Look at Axl. Try to mess with that guy. What do you think he'd do to you? Look at Gene Simmons. The only thing I can say...if anybody's going to play in this band, if you like to work, you'll like me. If you don't, you're gonna want me dead. I just wanna work and have fun. When you're in a band, and somebody says, 'I don't want to practice. What a drag, dude,' then what the f?!k are you in this business for? You just want to get signed and get your blowjobs? It ain't about that.

"I have a band I don't worry about," he continues. "I've got guys who can sing their asses off." They're no slouches in the musical department, either. The plethora of instruments on *Electric Rattlebone* includes bagpipes, sitar and slide guitar, which often lend the songs a Middle-Eastern quality. Again, Davidson stresses the purity of the approach. "Nothing fake. No samples. That's why I love the Black Crowes. They're my favorite new band. I love what they stand for. Mention the word sample, and you get punched out. In our band, everybody sings. And we can come out and play, like the Stones, J. Geils Band or T. Rex. We've got everything covered."

While Davidson is responsible for most of

the writing, and often works out songs on piano, "Rick and Tony use different guitar tunings, so they would take the songs and rip them apart with their playing." Blackeyed Susan songs don't have messages, rather, they tend to be positive observations taken from personal experience.

The first single, "None Of It Matters," is about "people with money...none of that really matters," believes Davidson. "All that matters is having friends that are tight, or a girl, and having them close to you. The material things don't matter. If you get them, great. That's the jimmies on the cake. All those extra toppings. I appreciate it, but it doesn't affect me. I don't play for that reason."

He plays for the love of it, as do the rest of Blackeyed Susan. In his 15 years in the music biz, Davidson's only been making a living for the last five. As a drummer, he did some of the usual cover gigs. "I played Accept and Metallica, and I had a 26-inch-bass drum. I was into the real double-kick, speedy stuff, before I eventually calmed down a bit. I also worked at a lumberyard. Erik worked at Tower Records; he did the displays. He's a great artist. Tony worked at a music store, and so did Chris, our drummer. So we had instruments out our...."

In addition to being an artist and contributing to the Blackeyed Susan logo, bassist Levy brought the band's name with him. Davidson liked the moniker because it didn't really have a specific connotation, though it is both a wildflower and a gun. "It matches the music," explains Davidson. "But then we found somebody else had the name. It cost me $30,000 dollars to go with it. They were some band that played at Jake's All-You-Can-Drink-Pub or something." Of course, they tried to think up alternate names, with a distinct lack of success. "You get real goofy," admits Davidson. "But you think it's cool in that second." For example? "The Swamp Candles, Roses And Rings—names that just didn't jive...that didn't have that spark."

Annamaria Di Santo

It's that spark, that honest, no b.s. vibe, which is so important to the Blackeyed Susan appeal. In fact, one of Davidson's sayings is, "Less is more; play for the song." Song. There's that four-letter word again. On that topic, Davidson has some advice for fledgling bands. "There's no rule saying, 'Do three or four songs on a demo.' Don't rush. Find a studio that's gonna love your songs and give you spec time [easier said than done]. You don't want a 'favor' deal. Honesty is the best thing. Make your demo tape like it's an album, and take the time to write songs," he stresses. "I didn't get signed because of what I did before—let me make that clear. They didn't even know it was me. Don't you think if someone had seen who I was right away, it would have been, 'Oh, it's *that* guy'?"

And what will the kids who either loved or hated Britny Fox say? Well, music speaks louder than words, and Blackeyed Susan's back-to-basics approach has a pretty persuasive voice. But no one knows better than Davidson that rock 'n' roll is a crapshoot, and he's laying odds that Blackeyed Susan will hit the jackpot—eventually, that is.

"We're gonna make it. We're gonna stay out [on the road] as long as we can. We're not really worried about it. Like the Crowes. They came out and played and played, and kept releasing songs." At press time, Blackeyed Susan's tour dates were unconfirmed, but Davidson was planning for the long haul. "The main thing is to get out and play, and kick ass. If there's gigs on the moon, we'll be there." •

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METALLI-WATCH

9th Installment: The continuing, unprecedented coverage of the making of the next Metallica record.

THIS MONTH: **"Somebody Get Me a Doctor!"**

During a recent visit to the RIP offices, I was immediately pressed to remember my other job as a qualified doctor. Editor Lonn Friend was flat-out on his couch, blubbering incoherently, drool frothing on his beard, eyes staring blankly forward, repeatedly blithering, "Hee-aav-y, maaan." After a quick examination of his pupils, I deduced that his condition was not drug-induced, but that he was, in actuality, suffering from a bad case of Metalli-surprise. Friend had heard four of the cuts off the next LP (and kept on blubbering that "Holier Than Thou" and "Wherever I May Roam" were monstrous beasts), and realized that, despite filthy rumors to the contrary, Metallica had not gone and done a dance-mix album with Bob Rock. Instead, they have surpassed themselves in terms of crunch factor, heaviness, quality and overall Metallica-ness. Having heard six of the cuts myself, and knowing the man wouldn't recover in time to meet the deadline for this column, I tucked him under a blanket, gave him a pacifier, prescribed God's juice (Jager) on the hour, and sat down to save his butt.

Briefly, since last month, James Hetfield and Lars Ulrich have gone to Canada, and the album is steamrolling toward completion. What follows is a conversation between Friend and Hetfield.

JAMES: Now we're getting down to actually seeing whole songs. Jason pretty much churned out all the songs quick; like, if not a track a day, then I'd say a day and a half per track. He roared through everything, got a big, fatty bass tone, and Kirk's in there with everything pretty much worked out too. He's had a few months, so he's got it all together. He just goes in and goes, "Whewwbleedle-bleeee," and there ya go! He started Monday, and to actually hear a solo on some stuff is great. We went to Vancouver for a week and did some overdub things—y'know, texture and atmospheric things, little surprises here and there. Vancouver was a nice little break from the L.A. scene [burps]. Bob needed to get home. He was losin' it, hahahaha! But it was a nice little change. It actually didn't rain up here.

RIP: So, in retrospect, all these delays and so on have been for a reason?

JAMES: Well, I mean it's not like we were sittin' around pissin' time away. Who wants that? But certain people took longer than other people, and that's just how it is. You can't really yell at them for that. You make them aware, but yelling ain't gonna make them work faster.

RIP: It seems the mix won't be a painful experience.

JAMES: No, it's just gonna be arguing over levels. I mean, we took all this time to get it right so that we don't have to do that in the mix. All the sounds are there. It's just pretty much a level thing. We'll sit down and work through the sounds with Bob. Y'know, "I want this a little brighter," or whatever, and have them fiddle with the mix.

RIP: Bob will mix the record?

JAMES: Yeah, it makes sense whoever records the record should just mix it—unless you've really lost perspective.

RIP: What about the cover art?

JAMES: I want a picture of Bob Rock on the cover.

RIP: Isn't it a black sleeve with just the logo?

JAMES: Something like that. Perhaps. We're still arguing over what's going on. Ahh, it's the f?!king cover. It doesn't really matter, does it?

RIP: And live plans?

JAMES: They're getting things booked up starting October.

RIP: What about the stage set?

JAMES: We're still workin' on that. People have brought up certain ideas, and we're just trying to get a different kind of thing going. I'm kinda the frontman, but I still have to play guitar, which means I can't run around with the mike; so we're gonna have a lot more mikes around, so we don't have to stand over them. We got a great idea, but they're just trying to work out the logistics of it, how it can work.

How can it work? How can what work? What is it? Stay tuned to Metalli-watch....

A RIP EXCLUSIVE BY STEFFAN CHIRAZI

DRUGS, GOD AND WARRIOR SOUL

BY MIKE GITTER

Thrust dead center in the midst of Kory Clarke's lower Manhattan, open-plan flat is one of those big-screen TV's that seems to be constantly on, constantly jacked into the guts of the spectacle. CNN beams out the latest spew of events on the hour, a kinetic pulse of information, misinformation, bullshit and social propaganda. Even with the sound all but extinguished, it's the core of Clarke's world, a steady supply of fuel that drives the Last Decade Post Metal groove of Warrior Soul. Then again, to make music as insightful and virulently exploratory as Clarke's, you need that constant input. Shit like:

—Footage from a freshly preindustrialized Kuwait. Rejoicing in a ruined country. The beaches are sticky, black slicks, and fires from burning oil fields will light up the night skies for months. Thousands of years to build it, a couple weeks to flatten it. And there'll be an Arby's on the block before you can say Schwarzkopf.

—Motorist Rodney King pulled over and beaten to a pulp in a dimly lit L.A. suburb. A bystander captures the LAPD in the clubbing, kicking act. By morning it's all over the news. Police Chief Gates disavows encouragement of that sort of behavior. Sorta like saying you don't eat turkey on Thanksgiving.

—Congress approving a bill to step up the military industrial complex and arms sales to third-world countries. Ironic, considering that the U.S. is constantly absolving those same government-sanctioned death squads of their debts and saddling taxpayers with the burden. Ever wonder where those tax dollars really go?

Pop imperialism, tabloid news, TV about TV, the data stream, the dream team. Kory Clarke is a rabid, self-professed media junkie who knows the dif between message and medium, the polyrhythms of news and how to read between the cathode lines.

Warrior Soul take all that and make it rock.

"I'd love to be on *American Interests*, *The McLaughlin Group*, or any of those Sunday-morning political talk shows!" Kory insists. "I think Dave Brinkley should call me up."

What would you talk about?

"The PMRC, how we feel about censorship in this country. Issues that are relevant to those of us who grew up watching the riots, those of us who grew up during the Nixon years. I tell ya, man, I'd make a great guest."

Warrior Soul's second album, *Drugs, God and the New Republic*, is the all too rare and satisfying juncture where rock 'n' roll doesn't rely on guava paste for brains and intellectualism doesn't translate into the heavy handed or just pain dull. It's metal with smarts, balls and a grungy underside that stinks of vocalist Clarke's Detroit origins. Tracks like "Children of the Winter" seethe like a supremely unhappy MC5, and "Rocket 88" and "The Wasteland" are like Iggy Stooge slapping down his copy of *US News & World Report* and aching for a fight. It's a potent blast of future-shock power rock channeled through bassist Pete McClanahan and drummer Mark Evans' angry thunder, underscored by the searing, psychedelic guitar riffs of Mr. John Ricco, and given a contorted face by a frontman who attacks his music like he was on a mission to scream and shout, to rant and roar, to grab the rock generation by the shirt collar and shake it to the core.

"Your entertainment doesn't necessarily have to be fun," Clarke declares. "We've all spent time listening to records that really aren't that much of a good time: Black Sabbath, Joy Division. But then again, there's times when you want that ZZ Top record blasting. I guess that's the balance that Warrior Soul tries to make. I want to do great artistic things, but I want to do great artistic things that sell. There's no reason why we can't do it, either.

Kristin Callahan

"There's sex appeal; catchy, groovy songs; he hard, heavy-hitting stuff," he continues. Seeing the success of someone like Queensyche, there's no reason that someone with slightly angrier approach and similar management [Ryche/Metallica management team Q-Prime also handles Warrior Soul] and a similar vibe can't break through as well."

A year on from Warrior Soul's bitter, uncompromising debut album, *Last Decade Dead Century*, Clarke seems somehow kinder and altogether gentler. He's not quite the sharp master of eloquent hate he once was. The downtown performance artist turned political analyst with a Marshall stack has been hailed as the new messiah of thinking man's rock, toured Europe with Metallica, and seen his vision of a smarter New Rock Nation come to pass. Kory Clarke couldn't be happier.

"We're getting tired of polished plastic pop hit," he opines. "The Poisons and Bon Jovis have run their course, and it's time for a change. Why do you think a band like Jane's Addiction has come so far this year? Why do you think a band like Poison is making a very serious attempt with 'Something to Believe In' to not sing about chicks? I don't think it's motivated by sales, either. I'm happy to see that, because it almost justifies what I've done. Maybe I've had a hand in changing things in this industry in some way."

Outspoken and irascible, Kory no longer speaks with the same utter contempt about the Axls and Sebastians of the world. His earliest interviews brimmed with a surfeit of disdain for rock's wildest, and garnered Kory more than his share of punch-out threats.

"Big deal," Clarke maintains. "Those people have improved their attitudes, plain and simple —not because of anything I've had to say, but just because of what's happening all around them. I'm not so full of total hatred as I used to be, either. I've grown up, gotten my piece, claimed my bit of turf. The axes are ground, thank you. I've read interviews with them now where they're actually saying something. I met Axl; he was cool. I've heard that Sebastian has a publicist that writes out a lot of things for him. That was one of my ideas last year...the Dan Quayle approach! Now you can read him, and he sounds intelligent. It's great!"

Not a trace of jealousy there, Kor?

"No. I've got what's really important to me: critical acclaim. Believe it not, I feel bad for a guy like Bon Jovi. I think he's tried to attain that with things like his solo album, and it hasn't worked. I feel bad for him. It's funny: I'd dig to be rich, but I'd rather be well-regarded. I feel much more fulfilled in knowing that critics, writers and people like me are into what I've got to talk about. Then again, how bad can you feel for a guy that makes $75,000,000 a year?"

A copy of *Time* bearing the headline "Police Under Fire" catches the intense frontman's gaze. He pages through the issue and

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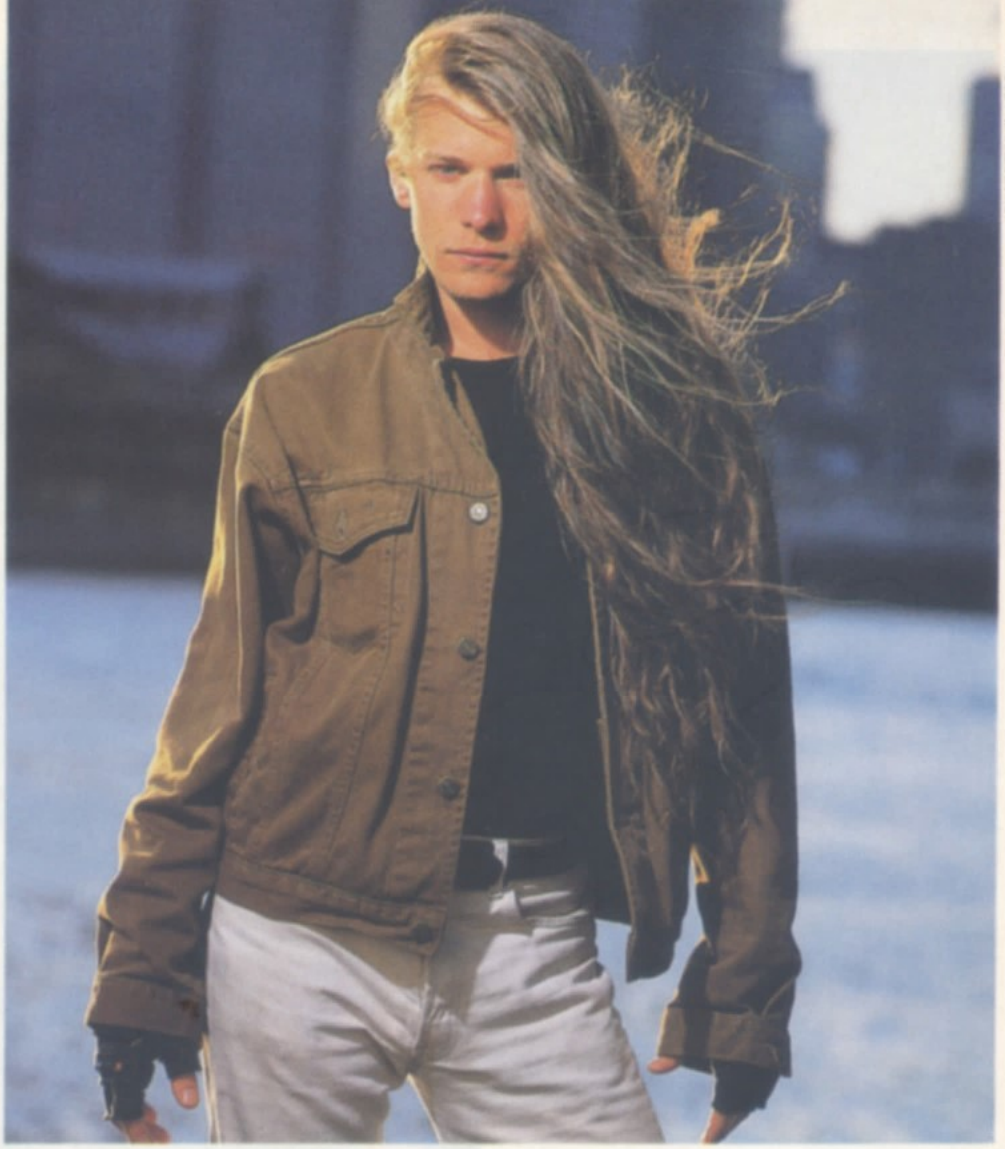

Ross Halfin/Zoomer

smiles. "I'm only too happy to see this," he beams. "'LAPD's got an awful smell,' you hear in one of my lines in 'The Wasteland.' It's a very corrupt, massive police organization. They dress like Gestapos, and are really into their trip. It's funny, the farther West you go of the Mississippi, the more Gestapo it gets out there. It backfired on 'em in the '60s, when Reagan was governor. Tons of riots. Watts. Same thing in Detroit. I was so glad to see those f?!kers get busted for their sadistic bullshit."

It's that very tumble of pissed-off awareness that gives Warrior Soul its bitter, burning edge. How many other bands could take a title as broad and all-encompassing as *Drugs, God and the New Republic*, and twist it into a full-blown anthem?

"The New Republic is the way we're starting to look at ourselves in the '90s, with drugs and God as the new symbols of good and evil," Clarke explains. "It seems that the right and left have really separated, and the middle ground doesn't seem to be screaming with the same anger. The concept is a little scary, a little ominous, a little Third Reich-ish. We're coming up on a brand-new age, an age when two sides of the American consciousness have come to battle on a flat field.

"It's almost time for a new political party. What's next, the Sony party? Betcha they've already got it."

He pauses for a moment, carefully pondering the issue. "Then again, America has to battle itself. That's what we're about: debate. At times we unify, but the rest of the time we should be arguing, trying to make things better. It only gets bad when ideas are suddenly imposed on people who don't want any part of them. The battle, the debate, the constant struggle to reexamine ourselves is precisely what this country should be about."

On what side of the fence did Warrior Soul fall during the war? Do terms like "New World Order" give Kory a twinge of skepticism? Do they seem too much of a nod to Big Brother?

"You know what scares me? The fact that George Bush has a 97% approval rating," Clarke declares. "This is very scary, considering how dirty his hands really are. I've never seen a guy seem so innocent while he's talking to people when he's had his hands in everything: the creation of Saddam Hussein, Noriega. Nobody seems to remember that kind of shit. Terms like 'New World Order' have their uses. They unite the country and inspire the simple people to fight these wars.

"Then again, the war had its good side," the vocalist points out. "It guaranteed market-price oil into the next century. It brought the Palestinian issue to the table, showed a softening in Iran—and those guys getting more chilled out doesn't bother me in the least. Most importantly, it brought people out of their complacent little worlds to scream, shout and debate."

A little revolution does a world of good. *Drugs, God and the New Republic* is a bit of future shock you might want to subject yourself to. •

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THE THROBS

Glen LaFerman

TALES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

By Janiss Garza

The first morning I woke up in New York, it was snowing—a rare sight for a Los Angeles native like me. The white flakes floated seductively by my window, and I hoped they'd still be falling by the time I went out, even though I knew I'd have to face the bitter cold. I shivered in anticipation.

The weather wasn't the only thing giving me goose bumps. I was in New York to meet the Throbs, a band that both frightened and fascinated me. The very first time I heard their debut album, *The Language of Thieves and Vagabonds*, its dark invitation sent chills up my spine. Songs like "Underground," "Come Down Sister" and "Ocean of Love" offered both hedonism and anger, while the despair of "Only Way Out" and the sadness of "Honey Child" reached out for me in an aching stranglehold. I was compelled to brave an East Coast January to meet this quartet and discover why they echoed the deeper parts of my psyche.

At the Geffen/DGC offices I met the four of them—singer Sweetheart, guitarist Roger Ericson, bassist Danny Nordahl and drummer Ronnie Magri. There was an edginess underneath the gracious introductions. They apparently weren't too fond of journalists, and I had heard they were so tough and unreasonable that, at one point, their status at the label was in question. It seemed an unlikely situation in which to unlock any of their hidden mysteries.

Sweetheart and Danny took off to do a radio interview, and a publicist sat me down in a room with Roger and Ronnie, shutting the door behind her. We immediately lit up cigarettes in the "smoke-free" office and eyed each other warily. It was up to me to take the first shot.

"Do you really think that life in the world is as dark as it's depicted on the record?" I asked Roger, point blank.

The guitarist was taken aback by the directness of my query. "Is it that grim, man, really?" he responded. "I think a lot of the songs aren't really about what people think they are, but the way that we express ourselves to write those songs...." He mulled it over for a minute, then shrugged. "Oh, okay, I guess we're just a dark bunch of motherf?!kers!"

We laughed, and I felt the atmosphere begin to thaw. I commented that there was a raw quality to the Dick Wagner/Bob Ezrin-produced LP that underscored its emotions.

"Everything was all done live," Roger explained. "It wasn't like a lot of overdubs. Plus, Bob was really cool. But they pushed some stuff on us, like, 'Do this and do that,' and at points we were throwing shit around the studio and saying, 'No way, we're walking.' You know, we always got what we wanted." The cockiness in his eyes subsided for a second. "We actually walked in there kinda scared," he admitted, "because Bob had this reputation for punching people out in the good old days, when they didn't like what he was doing. But he let us get away with a lot, man. Trashing microphones and stuff."

"Yeah, he's getting kinda old," Ronnie interjected.

"Trashing microphones?" I asked.

"When we were doing 'Honey Child,' " Roger related, "I was getting really annoyed, 'cause I couldn't get it straight. I mean, the song was written right before we went in, so we never rehearsed it. And it was funny, these old microphones—I just went, 'Ahhh!' and they went across the floor. I thought they were gonna kill me there, but it didn't happen."

Most of the songs were written as a group, but Roger wrote "Honey Child" on his own. I knew the story behind the ballad. I also knew that Roger usually refused to talk about it. But there was a question that had plagued me from the first time I heard the song, so I took a chance.

"On 'Honey Child' there's this sense of utter hopelessness," I began. "It's about how

emotions can't last through fast living."

"No, they can't," Roger affirmed, "which is very sad, but it seems to be the case."

Surprisingly, something in the tone of his voice gave me permission to continue; so very quietly I asked, "Then why live fast, if you have something that's meaningful to you?"

He hunched over, twisting the matchbook he was holding. "See, that's something I've been asking myself for the last year. I can just speak for myself, coming to New York for one reason—that was to get a band together, which is what we've got now. And maybe you meet somebody, and you hang out with somebody for a long, long time, and nothing is really happening with the career. Then, all of a sudden, this thing that you've been dreaming about since you were this big and listening to Alice Cooper takes off. You just get into a situation, like, you forget about everything else. You forget to do and say those things you should, maybe, to someone else, and the next week becomes a month, a year, two years, and before you know it, you've lost everything else you had around you. You've just got a bunch of bad habits and this band and that's all." He sighed. "And to tell the truth, it's not a lot of fun, you know. I mean, it's great to be in a great band and everything. It would be great if you can combine both things, but me, personally, I couldn't."

"That's the nature of this business," I nodded empathetically.

"You get so *angry*, man!" he emphasized. "You just forget about the rest of the world." He shook his head as we contemplated the music industry and the Throbs' alleged fits of temperament. "There's nobody that's gonna tell us, 'This is what you guys should do. This is what you guys really should have,' " Roger insisted, "because nobody's been there when we were sitting around, no place to live, writing these songs. Nobody was around when we were collecting cans in the street to be able to buy a pack of cigarettes. So f?!k 'em, you know. If nobody likes our attitudes, I guess that's just

Kristin Callahan

gonna hurt us; but it's so hard to pretend you like somebody you don't."

I took a drag off my cigarette and smiled slyly. "Actually, the bottom line is, if the record does well, it doesn't matter what you're like."

"Which is kind of scary though," Roger mused, "because we might get an attitude problem!"

The three of us burst into wicked laughter, and I felt myself being drawn deeper into something I still didn't understand.

Back in sunny L.A., the Throbs continued to haunt me. Although I knew we were kindred spirits, I still couldn't identify the connecting link. I had no choice but to visit the band one more time. So once they hit the road, I flew to Phoenix to meet with them and finally see them perform.

Both the band and I arrived at the Phoenix Holiday Inn the night before the gig, and about 30 seconds after I dumped my bags in my room, Roger rang me up, asking if I'd like to go out with some of the guys. The next thing I knew, I was whisked off to the club they were playing the next night, along with Roger, Sweetheart, Danny and Billy, their guitar tech. We had a few drinks there, then Roger, Sweetheart and I dashed off to a strip bar and had a few more drinks. Then we went back to the hotel lounge and had some more to drink, after which I got pushed into the pool, completely ruining my outfit. I stumbled back to my room at the end of the night, thinking, "Man, these guys know how to have a tour!"

I woke up at seven the next morning, both drunk and hung over. It would be hours before the Throbs were up and about, which was a good thing, because that's how long it took for me to pull myself together. Around noon I met with Sweetheart.

"Do you frequently have nights like that?" I asked him.

"Ummm...." he hesitated. "No offense or anything, but it was rather a boring night. We were all on the bus for a good 16 to 20 hours. You have all this adrenaline, and then you get out, and you think, 'What the f?!k am I doing here?' " He laughed. "I think for everyone, except Roger, it's their first tour. But it's what I expected it to be, I suppose...and then some!"

I'd seen their itinerary, and mentioned that it looked pretty brutal. "Yeah," the singer agreed. "Like someone said last night, someone just threw darts at a map." He shrugged. "Whether there's a record out or not, I just really want to be onstage. That's where it lies for me. I'm a shy person until I get onstage." I laughed at that. After all, that's not exactly what I'd heard. In fact, it seemed like everyone in New York had something to say about the guys in the Throbs—most of it negative.

"This band has just gone through so much shit, and that's why you've heard so many horror stories about the band," Sweetheart insisted. "It's because we wanted to go in and make our record, and we didn't want to be molded into this tight little package and say, 'Here, instant success.' We sliced our guts open to make this record, poured our guts on tape. I mean, Roger wrote 'Honey Child,' and I could relate to the lyrics so well that it brought a tear to my eye when I was in

(continued on page 102)

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Edited by Janiss Garza

PANTERA: *Cowboys From Hell—The Videos*
(A-Vision Entertainment)

Pantera's first home vid is obnoxious, puerile and adolescent—in other words, it's 40 minutes of pure, unadulterated fun! The self-proclaimed "best power groove band in the world" trashes a radio station, trashes their tour bus, annihilates a hotel room with their buds from Alice In Chains, goof around on a beach, goof off with their crew, terrorize Yngwie Malmsteen with a bag of doughnuts... oh yeah, and they play some raw, raunchy, sweaty, slamming thrash to boot. If reading this review leaves you breathless, imagine what it's like to watch this video.

Of course, all the horseplay on *Cowboys From Hell—The Videos* would be just an exercise in jerking off if Pantera wasn't such a stellar outfit. They prove their mettle in the live clips for "Heresy" and "Art of Shredding," shot at 1990's Foundations Forum. The quartet's performances are electrifying and entertaining. There's lots of macho posturing courtesy of singer Phil Anselmo, but the guy never takes himself seriously, which gives him a gritty charm. His bandmates—guitarist Diamond Darrell, bassist Rex and drummer Vinnie Paul—clearly play for the pure love of it. Their high energy onstage is capable of inspiring a near-riot—same with some of their antics *off-stage*. Other clips featured include "Cowboys From Hell" and "Psycho Holiday," both of which are performance-style vids, and "Cemetery Gates," part of which was shot at —where else?—a cemetery. The latter tune shows that for all its rowdiness, Pantera also has a pensive side.

You might think that it's a little early for such a young band to release a home video—after all, Pantera's debut album, *Cowboys From Hell*, is only about a year old and didn't exactly spawn any hit singles. But the footage here is just too darn enjoyable to keep under wraps. If you haven't yet been inducted into Pantera's wild-and-crazy world, this video is one helluva place to start. —*Janiss Garza*

METALHEAD IV
(VPI/Harmony/BMG Video)

Metalhead IV kicks off the festivities with a "Slaughter Rock Band Day" celebration at the Hard Rock Cafe in Las Vegas, where the mayor officiates and the guys receive a warm welcome home from a hard-core horde of Slaughtermaniacs. Drummer Blas Elias tells how he was headed for an alternate career until rescued by Slaughter, bassist Dana Strum reminisces over memorable mishaps on the road, and vocalist Mark Slaughter talks about getting pulled over for speeding...on his skates! A trip to England's Wembley arena is next, featuring those merry moshers, Anthrax. Despite an intrusive naked light bulb swinging distractingly throughout their interview, the band reveals what makes their *Persistence of Time* album tick, accentuated by clips from the video for their manic version of Joe Jackson's "Got the Time."

The fun continues with Great White's record release bash for *Hooked*, where cameo appearances by a fire eater, a sword swallower, singer Jack Russell's mom and an organ grinder's monkey are spotlighted amidst the carnivalesque revelry. As the happy host-with-the-most, Jack greets his rock 'n' roll cohorts and jams with his band. In a more sedate vein, Ozzy discusses making music his way and the importance of being true to himself. Footage of his older videos includes classic scenes of him as a fanged monster and casting his musical pearls before swine in church. Paying homage to his late, great guitarist Randy Rhoads, Ozzy offers recollections and a final piece of advice: "Be real. Don't fight what you really are."

Dispensing a similar gem is David Lee Roth, who counsels, "It's far better to fall flat on your face through your own effort than to die

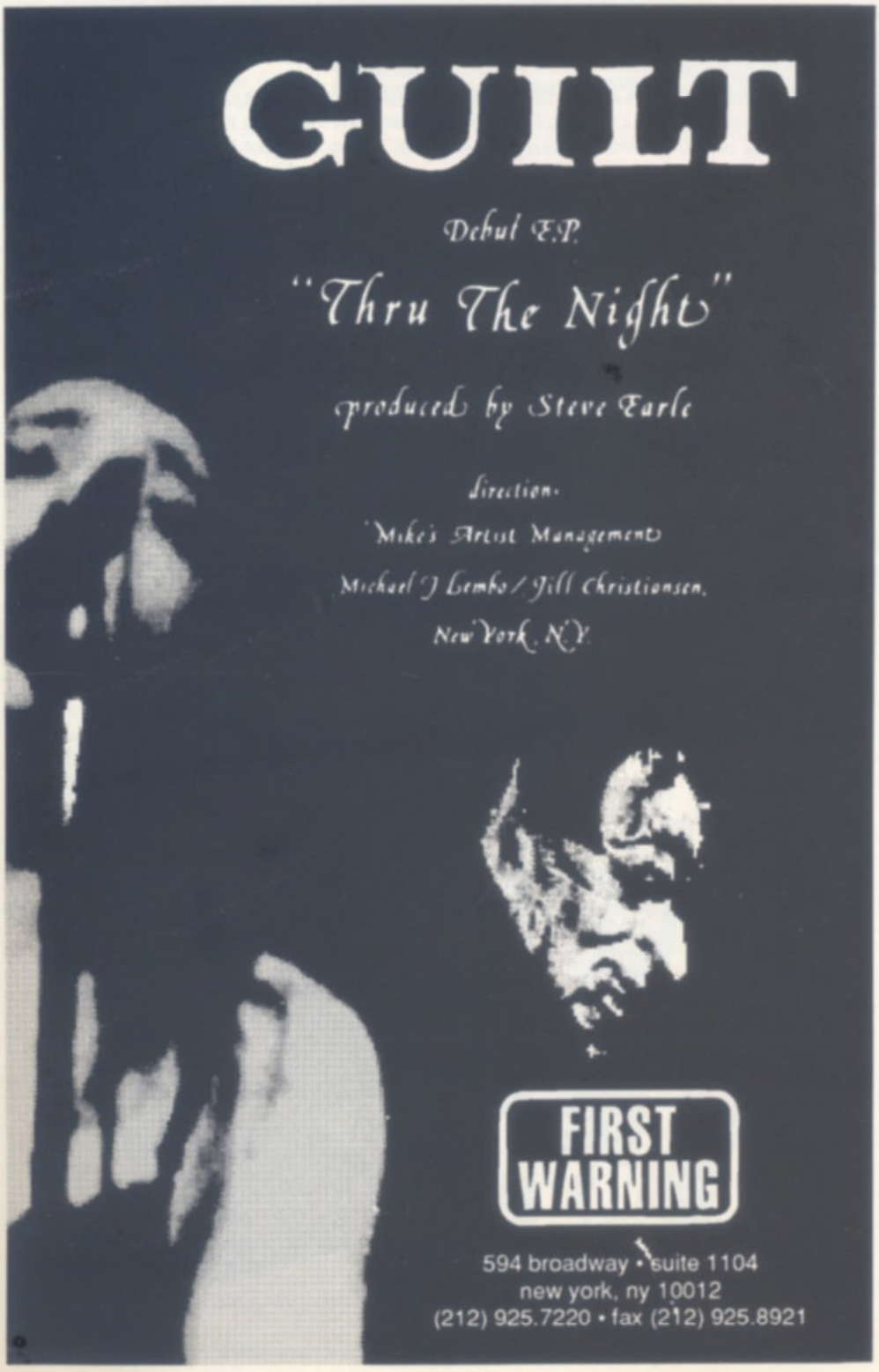
bending over for someone else." DLR swings through snippets of his videos and sheds light on his flamboyant approach to his career. Equally voluble is the Great Kat, a musical genius by her own decree, who demonstrates how she marries the magnificence of Beethoven with the mania of metal. Other segments depict Geffen Records A&R rep Vicky Hamilton talking about the music biz and tripping around Sunset Strip with her latest discovery, Salty Dog, and Megadeth hanging out up the street at Tower Records. Dave Mustaine is his usual cynical-yet-sincere self, and delivers a strong testimonial about giving up intoxicants—which hasn't hampered Megadeth's fast-and-furious, socially conscious audio assault one iota. There's the spectacle of those mighty medieval maggots, the chained, spiked, horned-and-horny ghouls of Gwar; a tour of London's Marquee Club with the spunky Jagged Edge; Sweet Addiction making their video; some tasty tidbits from Testament; segments on Cinderella, Suicidal Tendencies and Mary's Danish; a profile of one of the art world's most fascinating figures, Robert Williams; and the music industry-supported T.J. Martell Foundation's all-star softball game, spurred on by some fine-looking cheerleaders. So join the party, metalheads! *—Laurel Fishman*

TESLA: *Five Man Video Band*
(Geffen Home Video)

Tesla consists of five regular guys who have always been able to bring hard rock and blues right down to their roots. So it's no wonder that the quintet's live record, *Five Man Acoustical Jam*, brought them even more widespread popularity. This "all-wood" rendition of their hits and several tasty covers has a warm, intimate vibe that few bands are capable of achieving. Now, with *Five Man Video Band*, you can *see* why Tesla's down-home feel is so special.

A performance where all five bandmembers remain seated can be boring and static. Not so with this bunch. Much of the credit can be given to singer Jeff Keith, whose gawky, hyperkinetic presence keeps things moving. His long limbs are always in action, and his friendly chatter is earnest and charming. Tesla's other members—guitarists Frank Hannon and Tommy Skeoch, bassist Brian Wheat and drummer Troy Luccketta—also seem to enjoy themselves immensely. Frank smiles shyly as he strums his acoustic, Tommy sings a little novelty song he wrote as a teen, and Brian plays some pretty piano on "Paradise." It's also a credit to this band's talent that the acoustic renditions of their own tunes, such as "Heaven's Trail" and "Love Song," stand up strongly next to classics like the Beatles' "We Can Work It Out" and the Stones' "Mother's Little Helper."

Five Man Video Band is called "sort of an unofficial live Tesla video." The excellent camerawork and careful editing of this show leave that claim in doubt. Tesla booked five acoustic performances while they were on the road with Motley Crue. The Trocadero gig in Philadelphia, where this video was shot, was their fourth. Most likely the band realized by then that they were onto something good, and decided to film it, knowing full well that it was going to be released. But who cares about the motivations, really, when the honesty and fun of the performance shine through? That's the bottom line, and that's what makes this video so engaging. *—J.G.*



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Praise the Lords

ınd pass he ımmunition

On our with House of Lords

Peter Dokus/NGI

EFORE THE STORM: "That can't be real hair!" exclaims the plump, elderly d in the Wyndham Hotel as the elevator rs close behind House Of Lords frontman es Christian and keyboardist Gregg Giuf- I try to remember, we're in Atlanta, not Hollywood, where leather-, long-haired rock stars are part of your everyday tourist menu. hotel maid looks at me, actually expecting an answer.

ey, this band doesn't sample anything," I respond, clearing my at and heading toward my room. The maid looks at *my* hair, and ins shaking her head as the elevator doors whoosh shut.

otel rooms are weird. Each one has its own personality, yet they're irtually the same. A Southern flavor permeates this one, and the k buildings, birch trees and windswept streets outside my window force the whole vibe. The only thing that stands out is the motel on els that the House Of Lords call home, a gi- silver tour bus with a banner up front reading HERE ARE WE?"

by Tom Farrell

buring is all it's cracked up to be—it's a grind." wls Giuffria, reclining in a huge black-leather ir that does little to diminish his stature. After 15 years of road ex- ence, he could probably have this conversation in his sleep. "You on your tour bus. It's a massive amount of traveling. Plus," he adds, idenly leaning forward and smiling, "you do everything at times would never normally expect to do them at—like checking out of otel at three o'clock in the morning. It's really strange. Sometimes get into town at four a.m., after riding the bus for eight hours. walk into the hotel lobby looking like something from *Night of Living Dead*, and there are all these people waiting for you, screaming. You're standing there talking to them and signing autographs, and all you can think is, 'God, I've got to get some sleep,' and, 'Thank God I'm off that bus.' Which reminds me," he says with a wink and a smile, "it's time to hit the bus again."

The trip from the hotel to the Centerstage Auditorium is a brief one. The rest of the guys shuffle onto the bus and get in on Gregg's "Lifestyles of the Rich and Touring" conversation. New guitarist Doug Aldrich hangs up front with the band's tour manager and label representative, who keeps reminding House Of Lords how great they are. He's actually sincere, and the band smiles politely in appreciation. Bassist Chuck Wright and drummer Ken Mary throw their duffel bags into one of the 12 compartment bunks that make up the midsection of the tour bus, and then beeline toward the back to have at the video games. Vocalist James Christian is already in mid-play, waiting for them with an "I got here first" grin on his face.

"Traveling is the worst part about being on the road," they concur.

"And James!" laughs Giuffria. "But that goes without saying."

James takes his eyes off the video screen just long enough to give Giuffria a "Yeah, right, ha ha" look.

"We keep ourselves amused by beating on James after he's been drinking," Gregg teases. "You learn a lot about your bandmates on the road though."

"Yeah, I'm the best card dealer," says Chuck.

"I'm the best video-game player," interjects Ken, who waits patiently for James to screw up and pass the joystick over. It happens.

"And I'm the best punching bag," grins James, shooting a knowing smile at Giuffria as Ken Mary takes the control from his hand.

"James is able to hide in his bunk better than anybody! He burrows in there like Ratboy!" exclaims Giuffria as the rest of the group bursts into laughter.

"It's true!" backs up Chuck. "You'll be walking by his bunk late at night, and this fist just comes flying out of nowhere and tags you. You try to find him, and he's squeezed into the top corner like some sort of mutant creature!"

"Fun times on the House Of Lords tour bus!" chuckles Giuffria as we roll to a stop.

Outside, fans are lining up, hoping to get tickets to the sold-out show. As the bus doors swing open, a small gathering awaits the band. They take time to sign autographs and chat with the fans, many of whom lament over not being able to get tickets to *either* of the two sold-out shows. Many have been in line for the better part of the day.

Chuck mentions the familiarity of some of the faces. "There's some people, and I don't know where they get the money, but they show up at all of your shows. They arrive at the gigs before you do; they're waiting for you when you get to soundcheck; they know what hotel you're staying at; and when you get there, they're waiting for you in the lobby!" He smiles. "I don't know how they do it, but they do!"

Walking down the backstage ramp, Gregg chimes in, "The people you meet are always the most interesting thing about touring. I met this one girl who was training to be a massage therapist, and she told me that she wanted to try out some new techniques on me. Well, this girl had everything pierced—and I mean everything! Ears, nose, nipples, and things I never knew you could pierce, or would even want to! I told her, 'Pass!' "

"Sometimes they're not so humorous," adds James. "One girl was following me from town to town, and I politely asked her to please leave me alone, because she was really beginning to irritate me. I mean, I appreciate our fans greatly, but sometimes people can go a little overboard. I don't remember what town it was, but I go knock on my hotel room door, and when I opened it, she was standing there with her wrists slashed, saying, 'Look what you did to me!' " James shudders. "I couldn't believe it. We took her to the hospital, and I guess she got the attention she wanted from me. It was frightening and very, very sad. I felt like hell. I couldn't sleep for days."

Moments later the band has finished soundcheck, and they chat amiably with Matt and Gunnar Nelson, who are preparing to take to the stage themselves. "We get along great with the Nelson guys," Gregg comments. "We've just completed the half-Nelson tour, and now we're going for the full Nelson. A lot of times when you're on tour, the house is only half full by the time the opener goes on, but with Nelson and ourselves, the place is always packed 30 minutes before we hit the stage."

Chuck adds, "Yeah, and there's tons of screaming young females waiting for us when we hit our first chords!"

Showtime arrives, and the House Of Lords adjust to the constraints of the miniscule stage like real troopers. While Chuck tries to adjust his monitors to give him more leg room, James elbows his way past Doug. But even though they might feel like they're playing in an elevator, House Of Lords pulls it off and gives a "two thumbs up" performance.

Afterwards the guys are deciding where to go, and James, Ken and Gregg decide to hit Atlanta's famed Gold Club. Gregg sheds a bit of light on this situation: "The Gold Club is a Christian Science reading room with a bit of a twist to it. Some of the girls are dressed in the actual Biblical clothing, while others lean toward the more pre-Roman period. We just go there and pretty much read, and they dance for us. I like the reading and books the most. The selection is fabulous. We go there and swap recipes, and it's amazing, 'cause the decor is all in pink!"

Yeah, right. I don't see any books in this place. What I do see is more along the lines of Babylon, or maybe Sodom or Gomorrah. A lovely blonde wearing nothing but a smile comes up to me and drawls, "Ooooh! Are you with the House Of Lords? Where's Nelson? I thought they were coming!"

"Well," I retort, "if they do, you probably will be." Inside, girls atop tables and stages bump and grind as men insert dollar bills into their garters. A few of these girls are probably still paying off their plastic surgeons.

"This is my second time in Atlanta," James shouts over the music, "but my first time in the Gold Club. I plan on dating about five of the girls here."

"I've been through here a lot," Gregg reflects. "I'm from Gulfport, Mississippi. Atlanta's a real rock 'n' roll town. I love the South. I think they should have won the war. I love the women, the food, the women, the accents, the women, the scenery, the women. I came through here a couple of times with Angel, and Chuck and I were here a couple of times with Giuffria," he continues, reflecting on his previous bands. But what sets the House Of Lords apart from his musical past? "House Of Lords has a chemistry that really works, and works well," he states proudly, "and it's

Joel Gavoy Photofeatures

LORDS WITH GUY

that chemistry that keeps this band together." Hmmmmm....

IRONIC "CHEMISTRY" UPDATE: Shortly after the end of their stint as support band for Nelson, uncivil war hit House Of Lords and set a few important changes in motion. Some of them won't really be felt by fans, such as the decision of Kiss bassist/ Simmons label president Gene Simmons to part ways with RCA Records, thus putting House Of Lords in the precarious position of not having a label deal—which should change by the time this hits print. According to a spokesperson for RCA Records (which distributes Simmons Records), Simmons parted ways with RCA and is seeking another home for the band.

Things really hit the fan when it was announced that the band had "restructured" and formulated a new contract that made the only "official" bandmembers vocalist James Christian and keyboardist Gregg Giuffria, leaving drummer Ken Mary and guitarist Doug Aldrich independent contractors, and outright terminating bassist Chuck Wright! We were unable to reach Giuffria, but spoke individually to Wright, Mary and Christian by telephone.

"Gregg Giuffria's name should be changed to 'Greed' Giuffria," Wright sighs bitterly. "I got the phone call from Gregg, and he told me I was terminated. I couldn't believe it. Apparently, Ken [Mary] and Doug [Aldrich] were let go also. I told Gregg that he couldn't throw me out without a majority vote, and that I didn't believe that James [Christian] would vote against me." Upon speaking to Christian, however, Wright found he was wrong, Christian's response being, "Hey, it's business." Wright continues, "I couldn't believe it. I helped that guy out so much. When he didn't have any money, I bought him his apartment furnishings, everything from his bed to his silverware."

Wright's termination would seem to stem from an incident near the tour's end in an airport in Portland, Oregon, which resulted in a physical altercation between Giuffria and Wright, after Wright had dropped Giuffria's golf clubs! According to Wright, "Gregg sucker-punched me in the back, and I turned around and hit him three times. He was yelling at me that he was going to do this and that." Wright got the phone call a few days later.

Ken Mary, via telephone from his home in Phoenix, Arizona, says, "We're going to play on the next album. We have some 'shed' dates [an industry term for outdoor gigs], and we'll be playing those and on the album. But Doug and I are free to do what we want, since we're no longer 'officially' in the band."

Christian adds, "It was a business decision, and everything should pretty much remain the same. The band is not breaking up; we just made some changes that we felt were for the better."

Mary and Aldrich will continue to play with House Of Lords, and may also join Wright in some Japanese dates with Kal Swan (formerly of Lion, Aldrich's old band). As of yet, no permanent decisions have been made. •

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(continued from page 92)

there singing it...over and over and over!" We both laughed, then he continued. "To me, singing a song is an emotional thing, and if I don't believe in it, no one else is gonna believe it."

I'd heard similar words from other artists, but I'd never heard them said with quite the same intensity. This man with the unlikely moniker somehow managed to sound both naive and worldly-wise. I felt a certain admiration for him and his bandmates—screw what anyone else had to say.

A few moments later, when I was walking to the pool to transcribe the interview, I heard the Black Crowes' record blaring out of Roger's room. Chris Robinson's voice was wailing, "Sister Luck is a-screaming out somebody else's name!" Perhaps it was an omen, because when I met Roger and Sweetheart prior to soundcheck, they were both depressed. Something business-wise had happened that was definitely not in their favor. I never found out what it was, but I'd been working in music long enough to know that these things usually pass. I tried to explain this to Roger, who had been through the record-company mill once before with another band. "You know about all the shit that goes on. How come it still matters so much?"

"That other band doesn't count," he sneered. "This is the only band I've ever cared about." Then he and Sweetheart continued to discuss the possibilities of jumping off the roof of the Holiday Inn.

Things didn't improve during soundcheck. Everything was running late, nothing was going right, and the tension could be cut with a knife. Finally the shitty monitors, the feedback and everything else in the world got to Sweetheart. He violently threw the mic stand down and dashed out of the club, vanishing into thin air. "He said he's going home," I heard someone say. The band assumed that meant he was on his way back to New York. I watched, wide-eyed, as the remaining three huddled together in the bus, trying to figure out who was going to sing which song. I couldn't believe that the man who earlier had talked so passionately about performing had decided to jump ship before a gig. Everything was in shambles—the band, the tour, my feature. This was a disaster I hadn't expected to see.

Later that night I ran into Roger in the lobby, and we shared a cab to the gig. He'd taken this new turn of events in stride earlier, but now his mood was black. He scrunched down in his seat, bent in half like a paper clip, moaning, "I knew this was going to happen, even before we went on tour. I don't know what we're going to do now. I guess we'll just go straight to L.A. after tonight. Maybe we'll just go back to New York. Everything is falling apart." I felt so awful for him, but I said nothing. Really, there was nothing I *could* say.

The cab dropped us off, and we walked onto the bus...and there was Sweetheart, relaxing, smiling, surrounded by a few fans. "I went to a salon and got my hair dyed and my hands massaged," he announced. "I feel like a new man now."

I didn't dare look back at Roger, but I felt my knees go weak. That's when it dawned on me, the truth of what drives the Throbs. It's the rush, the relief, the dynamics of the situation that sucks you in and twists your mind. After a while it becomes a roller-coaster way of life, and you can't separate your identity from the high. The Throbs need to constantly bring themselves to face an emotional abyss. That's what impressed me about them in the first place. That's why I found the record so addicting—once you see that abyss, there's no escape. I knew the show was going to be great.

And it was. Sweetheart wickedly commanded the stage, driving the menace of his vocals down the throats of the eager clubgoers, while his bandmates played with a fiery, over-the-edge fervor. I had a few drinks in an attempt to erase the horror of the afternoon, at the same time knowing that those memories were going to continue knocking at my back door. After the gig the bus was overrun with Phoenix B-girls in black hats, and adventures were available for those so inclined. All was well with the Throbs. At least for an hour or so. But I could feel a chill in the Arizona night. •

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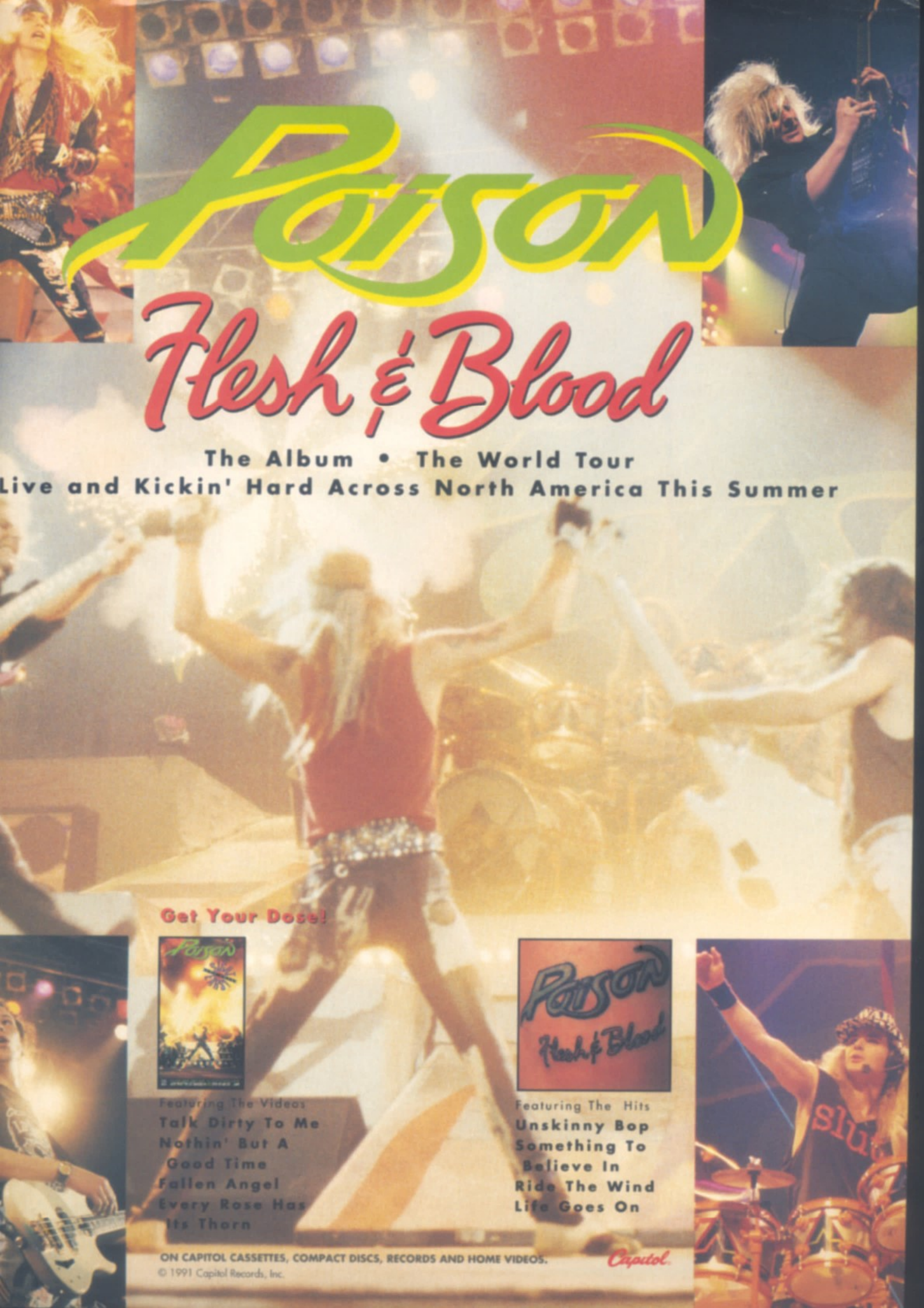
(1) Pussy Galore. (2) Laibach. BONUS: "Sympathy for the Devil." (3) Godflesh. BONUS: Earache. (4) A Latin name for the syphilis virus. (5) Samhain. (6) Mordred. BONUS: *In This Life*. (7) *Metal Machine Music*. (8) Green River. (9) Jimi Hendrix. BONUS: The psychedelic drugs STP and LSD. (10) 28. (11) Judas Priest. (12) Iron Maiden. BONUS: Clive Burr.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